BENGALURU, SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 2025 www.Bangaloremirror.com 16 Pages PRICE ₹4

Bangalore Mirror ON SUNDAY

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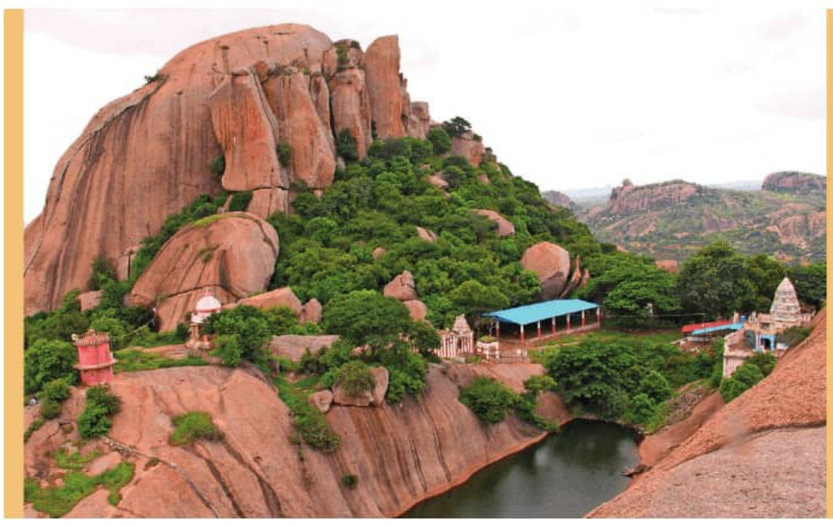
FREE TREE

BBMP begins survey of all trees in city that are choked by concrete bases; deconcretisation to begin soon... we hope

PAGE 5



ROCK STAR

Even as Sholay turned 50, not much to prop up famous shooting location in Ramanagara that stands tall just on power of nostalgia

PAGE 7

In 3 years, Bengaluru Urban recorded 8,891 cases of pregnancy in the 14-19 year age group — though teen pregnancies are dipping, its persistence points to lapses in legal enforcement, community awareness

THE END OF ADOLESCENCE

Majority of cases occur in 18-19 year age group

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In a city that prides itself on being India's technology hub, the persistence of teen pregnancies — including cases involving girls as young as 14 — paints a troubling picture of gaps in awareness, protection, and social safeguards. Official health records for Bengaluru Urban district reveal that in just three years (2023–24 to 2025–26), there have been 8,891 reported cases of pregnancy among girls aged 14 to 19 years.

The data accessed from the Legislative Council reply shows that while the majority of cases occur in the 18–19 age group, pregnancies in the 14–15 and 15–16 age brackets, though numerically small, are alarming due to their severe legal and health implications.

Year-wise breakdown

According to the data, between 2023–24 and 2024–25, Bengaluru Urban saw a 27.1% drop in teen pregnancies — from 4,498 to 3,280 cases. While the decline is significant in absolute terms (1,218 fewer cases), the disturbing reality of pregnancies among minors persisted. The 14–15 age group fell from 5 to 3 cases (a 40% decrease), the 15–16 group dropped from 22 to 12 cases (down 45.5%), and the largest segment — 18–19-year-olds — reduced from 3,659 to 2,884 cases (down 21.2%).

By 2025–26 (as per available data), the downward trend continued, with total teen pregnancies plummeting to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 »

"In the 17–18 and 18–19 categories, social factors like early marriage, lack of access to contraception, inadequate sex education, and socio-economic pressures play a role

—Devika Kumar, activist

Photo finish

Scam alert / Steganography: Malicious code hidden inside picture files

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Bengaluru is on alert as a fresh wave of scams in which victims are losing money not by clicking suspicious links, but by downloading seemingly harmless images on WhatsApp. This new tactic, detected in multiple states, hides malicious code inside picture files using a technique called steganography, allowing hackers to plant spyware on a victim's device.

Once installed, the malware can bypass phone security, access banking apps, intercept one-time passwords, and steal personal data. While Bengaluru police have confirmed that such cases have not been reported in the city, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have already reported significant incidents in recent months. In Jabalpur, a man lost nearly 2 lakh after downloading what appeared to be a simple photo sent from an unknown number, which turned out to contain spyware. In Maharashtra, police booked multiple cases where marriage invitations sent over WhatsApp were used to lure victims into downloading infected images. Officials say the tactic is spreading fast, with criminals constantly innovating to evade detection.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Art cosmos

Step into Kaal Netra – Sacred Matrices: Seema Kohli's Living Mythic Universe, an in-house curated exhibition exploring the artist's vibrant mythic cosmos. **Where: NGMA Bengaluru, Palace Road; When: August 26, 5.00 pm**

02 Comedy night

LOL @ Urban Solace, Bengaluru's first comedy stage and launchpad for hundreds of comedians, returns with host Shankar Chugani and a fresh lineup of local favourites. **Where: Urban Solace – Café for the Soul; When: August 20, 8 pm – 9.30 pm**

03 Cultural canvas

Experience Bengal at Shades (Tune of Inner Journey) — a group exhibition featuring 10 emerging Bengali artists exploring tradition and modernity through figurative, abstract, and folk-inspired works. **Where: Shades Creative Gallery, Koramangala; When: August 16 – 20, 11 am – 7 pm**

04 Sketch together

Join NGMA Bengaluru and Penciljam for a community sketching session that welcomes artists, illustrators, and enthusiasts to draw, observe, and share in a serene creative space. **Where: National Gallery of Modern Art; When: August 17, 11 am – 1 pm**

05 Otaku rave

Step into Bankai Beats Vol. 02 – Anime Takes the Stage at Church Street SOCIAL, a fandom-curated celebration of cosplay, quizzes, karaoke & AMV DJ sets. **Where: Church Street SOCIAL, Ashok Nagar; When: 17th August, 2 pm onwards**

City walkers sketch 'JAI HIND' on streets with GPS tracking

Meticulously planned over 30 days, the 12-hour GPS artwork blended technology, geography, and human spirit into a patriotic celebration etched in sweat and determination

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The walkers battled a jam-packed Avenue Road, carefully maneuvering through the chaos to stay on track

Bengaluru witnessed a unique patriotic tribute this Independence Day as a group of walkers turned the city's streets into their canvas, sketching the words "JAI HIND" using GPS tracking. The feat stood out not only for its scale and planning but also for the human spirit woven into the journey — from the endurance of a 12-hour walk to the inspiring participation of a 100% visually impaired athlete who helped bring the vision alive.

The initiative was led by Vikas Ruparelia, 53, Director of a private company and a GPS art enthusiast who has earlier created digital artworks in London, Barcelona, Vienna, Mumbai, and Ahmedabad. Calling it one of his most fulfilling projects, he said: "It took me nearly 30 days to plan the route. Executing it on Independence Day, in my own city, felt very special."

12-hour walk for patriotism

The team of walkers began their journey at 6 am from Magadi Road, winding through Bengaluru's streets before concluding at SP Road late in the evening. The tribute spanned 12 hours, including 9 hours and 45 minutes of active walking. Every step required precision as they followed a pre-designed digital route that would spell out "JAI HIND" on GPS-enabled apps like Strava and Garmin. "Even a single wrong turn could distort the design," Ruparelia explained. "We had to avoid dead ends, crowded intersections, and constantly check alignment. The effort demanded immense discipline, patience, and seamless teamwork throughout the long journey."

Science of drawing with GPS

GPS art, also known as Strava art or running art, works by tracking a person's movement through a GPS-enabled device, which records their coordinates in real time. These points are then connected into continuous lines on mapping apps. By carefully planning a route in advance — saved as a GPX file, essentially a digital blueprint — walkers can turn an entire city map into a sketchpad. "Behind the scenes, GPS relies on a constellation of satellites orbiting Earth. Devices on the ground pick up signals from at least four satellites to calculate location using trilateration. For the Bengaluru walkers, each stride became latitude and longitude points that shaped the bold letters of 'JAI HIND' across the city," he explained.

Inspiring team effort

Among the walkers was Vijay Kasivel, a manager with a public sector bank, who stood out as a source of inspiration. Despite being 100% visually impaired, Vijay is not only a regular fitness enthusiast but also a triathlete and motivator. His participation gave the effort a deeper meaning, symbolising resilience, inclusivity, and determination.

Precision, patience, and patriotism

Creating GPS art is very different from casual walking or jogging. The Bengaluru team had to follow the pre-decided GPX path with precision, choosing streets carefully — straighter ones to form letters and curved ones to shape edges.

One of the most difficult stretches came at Avenue Road, where dense traffic slowed their pace to a crawl. It took nearly an hour to navigate the jam-packed stretch, and to shape the letter N, the walkers had to move up and down the same road multiple times, drawing curious stares from shopkeepers and passersby. The long hours tested stamina and patience, but the group pressed forward, motivated by the thought of watching their effort transform into art on digital maps. "It's a blend of technology, geography, and human endurance," Ruparelia said. "Seeing the words 'JAI HIND' emerge on screen was unmatched joy."

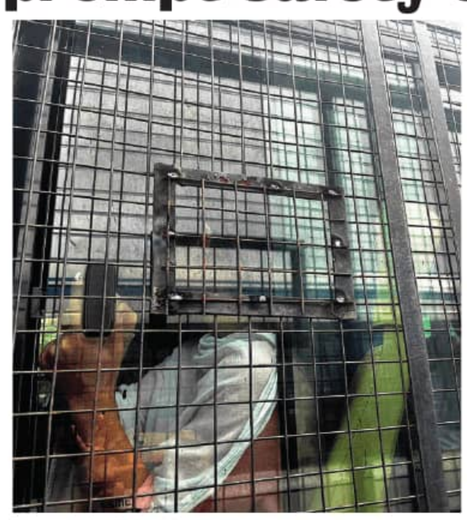
Message beyond maps

The finished artwork was more than a digital design; it carried a patriotic spirit that touched everyone who saw it. It proved how fitness, creativity, and national pride could merge into something powerful. Ruparelia believes GPS art is accessible to all. "Start with a star, a heart, or even your initials in your neighbourhood. With some planning and a GPS device, the joy of watching your drawing appear on the map is magical," he said. For Bengaluru, "JAI HIND" wasn't just traced across roads — it was etched in sweat, spirit, and most of all, in their hearts.

Leopard scares prompt safety overhaul at BNP

Following the recent leopard scare at Bannerghatta Biological Park (BNP), Karnataka Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar B Khandre has directed officials to strengthen visitor safety by installing protective wire mesh on the windows and photography slots of all safari vehicles.

The move comes after the August 15 incident when a leopard leapt into a safari vehicle and injured a 12-year-old boy before being driven away. The episode triggered concerns over tourist safety inside the country's largest leopard safari enclosure, which spans nearly 20 hectares and houses semi-wild leopards rescued from Bengaluru and surrounding areas.



Protective wire mesh fixed on safari vehicle windows at Bannerghatta Biological Park to enhance visitor safety after the recent leopard scare

Minister Khandre said the mesh installation is a mandatory step to prevent similar breaches in the future. Alongside physical safeguards, he instructed officials to strictly brief tourists on proper conduct during the safari. Warning messages will be printed on tickets to reinforce safety guidelines. "The safety of visitors is our top priority. Wire mesh has been fixed across all safari vehicle windows, and tourists will be informed about dos and don'ts before every ride," Khandre stated. He also stressed that safari staff must remain alert and all precautionary measures strictly enforced, ensuring the excitement of the leopard safari never compromises safety. **— BMB**

Constables seek justice, face endless neglect

Despite a Supreme Court order and repeated government instructions, police constables seeking spousal transfers have been left in distress for over seven to eight years. Many who applied for inter-district transfers as early as 2015–16 are still waiting, while only a few are approved annually. Constables allege that senior officials in the Bengaluru police headquarters deliberately block these transfers, despite the Home Minister's directive that those completing seven years of service must be considered. The apex court had clearly ruled that couples in government service should be allowed to work in the same location, but this policy remains largely unapplied in the police department.

Frustrated by prolonged neglect, several constables have written to the President of India and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah seeking permission for mercy killing if their pleas remain unheard. They narrate harrowing personal struggles — motherless children without caretakers, aged and ailing parents left unattended, and marital lives strained by forced separation. Despite sacrificing seniority and filing multiple representations, they remain ignored. Many now warn that if transfers are not granted, the Home Department must bear responsibility for the tragedies that may follow. **— BMB**

5 dead in massive fire at commercial building

2 children among victims; case against building owners; spotlight on violations

Just a day after a blast at Wilson Garden, a devastating fire engulfed a commercial building in Nagarathpete near KR Market in the early hours of Saturday, killing five people, including two children. The victims have been identified as Madan (38), his wife Sangeeta (33), and their two sons, Mitesh (8) and Vihan (5). Another victim, Suresh, who was on a different floor, also lost his life in the tragedy. According to officials, the fire broke out around 3 am in a godown on the ground floor of the building.

The flames quickly spread to the upper floors, trapping the family inside. While many occupants managed to escape, the family and Suresh were unable to get out in time.

Fire and emergency services rushed to spot and put out the fire after 10 hours of operations. According to a complaint filed by Gopal Singh, his brother Madan Kumar (36), who ran Madan Steel on the ground floor of the building owned by Balakrishnaiah Shetty, was among the deceased. The fire broke out at the ground floor where the raw materials to manufacture plastic mats were stored and it soon spread to the entire building where people were living on the first, second and third floors. Though an electric short circuit is suspected to have triggered the fire, the reason is yet to be ascertained.

Case against building owners

The complaint alleged that the building owners, Balakrishnaiah Shetty and Sandeep Shetty, had constructed and rented out shops, godowns, and residences illegally, without securing permissions or installing basic fire safety measures such as ventilation, exits, or extinguishers. Police have registered a case and launched an investigation.

City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh visited the site and reviewed the situation. Addressing the media, he said the heavy smoke and fire made rescue operations tougher. "The small, congested rooms inside the building are adding to the challenges of the operation," he said.

Firefighters, forensic experts, and police are jointly investigating the cause of the fire, while rescue teams continue operations.

Cramped spaces

"It appears that the fire accident may have been caused by an electrical short circuit. I will also speak to the Chief Minister about providing compensation to the victims' families. In areas like Nagarthapete, many four- or five-storey buildings have been built in small spaces, often used like godowns. BBMP must pay serious attention while issuing trade licences, as thousands of such buildings exist in this locality," said Home minister G Parameshwara. **BMB**

Locked homes on their radar

The Girinagar police have arrested three persons involved in a daylight house burglary and recovered gold, silver, and a two-wheeler worth ₹9.55 lakh.

The case was registered after a Dwarka Nagar resident complained on June 8, that burglars had broken open the rear door of his house and stolen 70 grams of gold and 300 grams of silver ornaments. Police apprehended three suspects on July 13 near Nandanavana Park, Hosakerehalli. The accused have been identified as Purushottam (34), Anil (27) and Nikhil (24).

Serial burglars

Bagalgunte police have arrested six people, including a woman, in connection with a series of house burglaries and recovered 99 grams of gold ornaments worth ₹9.90 lakh.

A resident of Mallasandra Pipeline Road, Dasarahalli, filed a complaint on July 12, after discovering that burglars had broken into his house, stolen 19 grams of gold, ₹1.56 lakh in cash, and documents.

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City's overflowing manholes to be modernised by AI-driven robots

BWSSB embraces robotic cleaners and AI-powered monitoring to tackle overflowing manholes, promising faster complaint resolution, safer operations, and reduced risk for sanitation workers across the city

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AI-powered robots deployed to clear Bengaluru's clogged manholes safely and swiftly

With nearly 12,000 km of sewer lines and over 3 lakh manholes, B'luru's ageing system faces mounting pressure, especially during monsoons — demanding urgent innovation

Bengaluru is set to adopt a high-tech solution to tackle the recurring issue of overflowing manholes and clogged sewer lines. The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) plans to deploy advanced robotic technology to clear manholes swiftly, reducing the need for manual intervention. With rapid urban growth, maintaining the city's vast sewer network has become increasingly challenging. Since 2023, several Indian cities have introduced robotic systems for efficient sewer management, with Thiruvananthapuram leading the way, followed by Chennai, Guwahati, Gurugram, Hyderabad, and others. BWSSB is now moving in the same direction to enhance sanitation management.

Scale of the challenge

BWSSB serves over 11 lakh connections through a sewer network spanning 11,894 km and encompassing 3.19 lakh manholes. Continuous urban expansion, new residential connections, illegal sewer hookups, and heavy traffic put additional strain on the system, often causing manholes to overflow, particularly during the monsoon season. Traditional cleaning methods using jetting, sucking, and lifting machines are slow, difficult in narrow spaces, and often disrupt traffic, prompting the board to explore robotic alternatives.

Robotics and AI-powered monitoring

Explaining the move, a BWSSB official said, "Robotic devices fitted with cameras will navigate low-light, confined areas, transmitting live images to operators for real-time monitoring. AI will guide operations, enabling swift, thorough cleaning in zones beyond the reach of manual machines. Initial trials will focus on service contracts instead of outright purchase, ensuring faster adoption while assessing cost-effectiveness.

BWSSB aims to resolve manhole complaints within 12 hours. A tender has been floated for a pilot service worth ₹5 lakh over 15 days."

Enhanced safety with DI manhole covers

In parallel, BWSSB will install Double Iron (DI) pressure manhole covers on approximately 1,500 manholes in low-lying areas. These sturdy iron covers can withstand vehicle weight and protect pedestrians, offering durability and potential cost savings through reuse.

Safer and cleaner city future

"The integration of robotics, AI supervision, and DI manhole covers marks a major step in modernising Bengaluru's sewer management. While initial investments may be high, the technology ensures safer operations, minimises human risk, improves response time, and reduces long-term maintenance costs, positioning the city as a leader in tech-driven sanitation solutions," an official said.

Plastic-free celebrations gain momentum in Bengaluru

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Residents celebrate with scrap fabric buntings and compostable flowers, embracing conscious, plastic-free choices

A wave of change was visible this Independence Day as residential communities across Bengaluru celebrated with an emphasis on sustainability. Many chose to shun plastic balloons, flags, and synthetic decorations, replacing them with reusable fabric, cardboard, and paper-based alternatives. The celebrations demonstrated how communities can embrace patriotism while being mindful of the environment. At Aakruthi Silverline in HSR Layout, residents showcased a 10-metre-long cloth bunting prepared with the help of a local tailor.

"Ours is a small community, and we wanted to celebrate a plastic-free and zero-waste Independence Day this year. We approached our local tailor to prepare the tri-colour bunting, while rangoli was created using flowers. The idea was to promote sustainability and encourage plastic-free festivals," said Lalithamba BV, a resident of Aakruthi Silverline.

SNN Raj Etternia in Parappana Agrahara celebrated with more than 600 residents. They created a reusable map of India from a wooden board and colourful papers.

"Apart from using cloth buntings, natural flowers, cardboard, and paper, we served food in leaf bowls. All flowers and leaves will be composted at our in-house centre. However, it was saddening to see every road outside our complex littered with plastic balloons. Citizens must be guardians of the city, not abusers," said Arvind Kandula, a resident of SNN Raj Etternia.

Pebble Bay apartments in Dollars Colony also went eco-friendly, preparing 12 buntings, 15 fringes, and five wreaths using scrap fabric.

"We sourced waste fabric from Hasiru Dala, already colour-sorted. We further sorted it by material and usability before tailoring it into buntings, fringes, and wreaths. For the first time on Independence Day, we decided to move away from balloons and opt for a zero-waste celebration," said Bhavna Kanoria, a Pebble Bay resident. At BEML Layout, the day was observed with floral decorations, reusable cutlery for breakfast, felicitation of pourakarmikas, and a blood donation camp in association with a hospital. Residents of Purva Paradise in Domlur used tricolour crochet triangles made by elders from Malleswaram.

"These, along with cloth buntings and reused paper decorations from earlier years, helped us make a strong sustainability statement," said Jaya Bhalla, a resident.

Environmentalists and anti-plastic crusaders applauded the shift.

"It is wonderful to see citizens honouring their country while respecting Mother Earth. The persistence of our 'NoBalloonsPlease' campaign is paying off not only in Bengaluru but also in cities like Chennai and Mumbai. Many venues that once used balloons have shifted to reusable decorations. Posters created by campaigners helped communities convince their organisations to avoid balloons," said Odette Katrak, co-founder of Beautiful Bharat, a citizen volunteer group.

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Waste woes

BTM 2nd Stage

In Dollars Colony, BTM 2nd Stage, behind a mall, residents report no door-to-door garbage collection, with widespread dumping on vacant BDA land creating unhygienic conditions.

Sinkhole alert

BTM Layout

A developing sinkhole on 4th Main, near a ashram in BTM 2nd Stage, is expanding steadily, creating a hazard for pedestrians and vehicles passing through the area.

Health hazard

Krumbigal Road

Krumbigal Road is strewn with trash, causing mosquito infestations and obstructing pedestrian movement, raising health and safety concerns for residents and passersby.

Cracking the concrete conundrum

Field officers of BBMP collating data on all trees that have concrete at base; agency will then start removal process

NGT norms say all tiles, road construction material within a 1-mt radius of tree bases must be removed to ensure that rainwater seeps through to the roots

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Bengaluru's civic body is yet again on the path to freeing the city's avenue trees from the concrete trap.

According to the Forest Department of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), it is currently consolidating data of concretised avenue trees across the city.

"Our field officers are recording and consolidating data of every tree in the city that has concrete at its base, up to the trunk. Once we have the location and number of such trees, we plan to lay it down on a map for easy identification of such trees to remove concrete from bases," said Sudarshan GK, Deputy Conservator of Forest (DCF), BBMP.

With this data, the Department plans to approach the Road Infrastructure Department of BBMP and get these trees deconcretised as per the order passed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in the past.

"The exercise should take a couple of weeks. The data collected will then be shared with the Road Department as concretisation has happened during road repair and construction work," added the DCF.

In the past, multiple benches of the NGT across the country have passed orders in various cases concerning the concretisation of tree bases. The tribunal has reiterated that there shall be no concrete or construction material work at least within a one-metre radius of the trunk of trees. Moreover, all paving tiles, road construction materials within a one-meter radius of tree bases must be removed to ensure that rainwater seeps through to the roots.

The issue of Bengaluru's avenue trees choking with concrete has been brought up by citizens and tree activists on multiple occasions. The Forest Wing, in December last year, also announced that a budget of Rs 2 crore was kept aside for this project. Officials said that the deconcretisation process will begin in 2025.

Moreover, in a Government Order (GO) issued a couple of months ago, the Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment of Karnataka stated that tree bases across Karnataka, including in Bengaluru, should be deconcretised to promote their health and survival. The GO was issued on directions from Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre.

However, the initiative is yet to see the light of day.

City-based tree activists and environmentalists say that fresh concretisations should be avoided by incorporating strict terms and conditions around the handling of trees in the road contracts to be awarded by BBMP's Road Infrastructure Department. The contracts should have a binding condition for all contractors, and they should be penalised for ignoring this aspect, an activist told BM.

Darshan, Pavithra, 3 aides shifted to trial barracks

After cancellation of their bail in the Renukaswamy murder case, actress Pavithra Gowda, actor Darshan, and three others lodged in Parappana Agrahara Central Prison have been formally assigned undertrial prisoner numbers.

Pavithra has been numbered 7313 (A-1), Darshan 7314 (A-2), his manager R Nagaraj 7315 (A-11), driver M Lakshan 7316 (A-12), and businessman Pradosh Rao 7317 (A-14). Earlier, when Darshan was arrested in June last year, he was given prisoner number 6106 at Parappana Agrahara and later 511 at Ballari jail.

Sources said Darshan, who was initially kept in the admission quarantine barrack, was shifted with the others to the trial prisoners' block on Friday morning after breakfast.

Jail authorities confirmed that unlike before — when images of Darshan casually socialising with rowdies inside the premises had leaked — this time strict measures are in place. Staff have been instructed to deny any special privileges, maintain constant surveillance, and face stern action for lapses. Notably, Darshan has chosen to remain silent since being lodged back in prison. Meanwhile, two more accused, auto drivers Anukumar and Jagga alias Jagadish, were arrested in Chitradurga and remanded to judicial custody before being sent to jail.

Fast-track plea

Meanwhile, police are considering filing a plea for the formation of a fast-track court to ensure a speedy trial against jailed Darshan, Gowda, and other accused, sources confirmed on Saturday.

Police sources revealed that the department is already making preparations in this regard and will approach the government for its consent. The decision has been taken in the backdrop of the Supreme Court directive to complete the trial and dispose of the matter swiftly.

According to sources, the police are preparing to get the trial completed against Darshan and the other accused within six months and then submit a report to the Supreme Court after securing convictions in the case.

Senior officials are in discussion with the law department, and the request will be formally placed before the government on Monday (August 18). **–BMB& Agencies**

3 killed in accident near Nelamangala

Three people died in an accident on National Highway 48 near Gundenahalli village in the early hours of Saturday. The accident occurred around 3.50 am when a lorry transporting sheep from Tumakuru to the city suffered a punctured tire near Kamadhenu Hotel.

The driver pulled the lorry to the side of the road and, along with the cleaner, started changing the tire. At that moment, a KSRTC bus heading from Ballari to Bengaluru rammed into them from the left rear side. The impact killed cleaner Srinivasa (49) on the spot, while driver Anand (26) and Nasir Ahmed (46) sustained serious injuries. Both were rushed to a nearby hospital, but succumbed to their injuries shortly after. All three were residents of Bengaluru.

The Nelamangala Traffic Police immediately reached the spot, conducted an investigation, and shifted the bodies to a government hospital for postmortem. **–BMB**

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Richards Town wants authorities to snap out of civic neglect

Unsafe footpaths, poor water supply, encroachments, and garbage dumping leave senior citizens and families struggling, prompting calls for coordinated civic action in Richards Town

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PICS: KAUSHIK JN

(Left to Right) Overflowing trash piles up on Nala Road, creating unhygienic conditions; Pedestrians navigate damaged footpaths on Hennur Road, highlighting urgent need for repairs

The Residents of Richards Town, Cooke Town, Pillanna Garden, and neighbouring areas gathered at Richards Park this week to highlight a host of unresolved civic grievances. The meeting brought together people from different neighbourhoods who shared specific challenges, with a common demand for urgent intervention from the BBMP, BWSSB, BESCOM, and police.

Crumbling roads and unsafe footpaths

Residents living along Hennur Road complained that the main stretch has become unsafe for pedestrians, with missing slabs on drain-cum-footpaths and uneven surfaces. John Armstrong Road and Davis Road were flagged for broken pavements, poor street lighting, and frequent obstruction by parked vehicles and school vans, forcing pedestrians—especially senior citizens—onto busy traffic.

"Motorists honk recklessly at Davis Road intersection with no traffic police in sight. Garbage dumping continues unchecked, and pet owners don't follow rules," said Stanley Carvalho, a long-time resident.

Anil Cariappa added that Richards Town, home to many senior citizens, urgently needs better footpaths. "Miscreants have also turned Richards Park into a nuisance spot," he said. Anna Alex Jacob, Vice President of the Residents' Association, said street vendors occupy footpaths, though no official vending zone exists. "BBMP must clear encroachments and keep footpaths accessible," she demanded.

MY VOICE BangaloreMirror

Water scarcity persists

Water supply issues have added to the frustration. Residents said the earlier schedule of supply on Mondays and Thursdays has been disrupted for six months, forcing dependence on costly private tankers. Despite repeated complaints, the problems remain.

"We have been requesting BWSSB to ensure regular Cauvery water supply, but nothing has improved," said KK Uppal, past president of the association. Ahmed Ali, president of the association, described Richards Town as one of the city's highest property tax-paying areas yet treated like a "stepchild." "We have the largest ratio of senior citizens, but they can't even walk on footpaths due to debris and encroachments. Authorities keep shifting blame instead of acting," he said.

Road damage, digging and flooding

Residents also criticised repeated digging by BESCOM and BWSSB, leaving key stretches like Lazar Road unrepaired for months. High-voltage fluctuations have triggered fire risks, with residents asked to install costly protective devices themselves. Increasing road levels have also worsened flooding during rains, prompting demands for proper re-laying and drainage planning.

Safety and crime concerns

Another major concern was drug peddling. Residents alleged that Gospel Street has become a hub for open drug sales, exposing children to criminal activity. Women's safety was also raised, with complaints of chain-snatching, groping, reckless two-wheeler riding, and lack of police patrols at hotspots like Viviani Road and Bengaluru East Railway Station.

Residents said better street lighting, CCTV cameras, and regular beat patrols are urgently needed.

Garbage and sanitation issues

Cooke Town and Pillanna Garden were described as "garbage gardens," plagued by irregular collection, open dumping, rat infestations, and foul odours. Monsoon brings mosquito breeding, while dry waste piling up in summer creates fire risks. Garbage transfer vehicles spilling waste on Nala Road was cited as a regular nuisance.

Traffic chaos and encroachments

Traffic congestion remains another daily ordeal. From unregulated parking on Hall Road to kiosks blocking Cooke Town Road, residents said peak-hour movement has become impossible. Illegal constructions near the Sundar Hospital subway in Pillanna Garden have further worsened congestion, while incessant honking at junctions has added to noise pollution.

Neglected park and amenities

Ironically, Richards Park itself, once a community asset, was highlighted as neglected. Families avoid the space due to poor lighting, broken pavements, non-functional fountains, and unusable public toilets. Residents urged the BBMP to restore the park with better maintenance, more greenery, and visible police presence after dark.

Demand for coordination

Residents stressed that poor coordination between civic agencies is the root cause of most problems. "BBMP blames railways, BWSSB blames BBMP, and nothing moves forward," one resident said. They demanded integrated planning and timely execution of civic works, calling for accountability across departments.

When alerted to the complaints, BBMP Executive Engineer (Major Roads) Fateh Ahmed promised to direct the annual maintenance team to fix the damaged footpaths. "I will send my subordinate to the spot," he assured. BWSSB Assistant Engineer Mallappa claimed that water supply had been restored, saying all households received water on Monday night. On security issues, Pulikeshi Nagar Police Inspector assured residents that patrolling will be stepped up at Richards Park to keep miscreants in check.

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Freedom Park echoes with chants for street dogs

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KAUSHIK JN

Children and elders protested against the SC's relocation order

Bangaloreans in their hundreds gathered at Freedom Park on Saturday afternoon to express solidarity with animal lovers in Delhi protesting against the Supreme Court's recent order to relocate street dogs to shelter homes.

More than 500 people, including women, children, and senior citizens, came together to voice their displeasure at the ruling. Many carried placards with striking messages such as "We are not a minority, we are suffering majority," "North, south, east, or west, indies are the best," "You didn't create me to eliminate me," and "Save our indie dogs from the unfair SC ruling." Although the SC order was framed around protecting children, the gathering at Freedom Park saw young voices teaching lessons in empathy. "I am on the streets every evening to play with my friends. However, I have never been attacked by street dogs. What I have learnt by interacting with them is, if you are kind to them, they will reciprocate with more kindness," said a 10-year-old girl, earning loud applause from the crowd.

Citizens from different neighbourhoods first assembled outside Freedom Park and then marched together, chanting slogans against the order.

"We have gathered to show solidarity with the community animal lovers of Delhi. We want to convey the message that human-animal coexistence is essential. The solution is not to round up street dogs and put them in shelter homes. This knee-jerk reaction will only complicate matters. The real way forward is to vaccinate and sterilise street dogs and encourage adoption instead of buying bred dogs," said Lalita Iyer, a Bannerghatta Road resident.

Participants stressed that the urgent priority is to improve the quality and capacity of Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres across all cities.

"If mass vaccination of billions of human beings was possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, why can't we vaccinate a few lakh dogs? It is purely a matter of political will. Instead, the SC and authorities such as the Delhi Municipal Corporation and Delhi government have chosen to harass animals and their caretakers," said a Yelahanka resident who joined the protest.

Several participants described the SC order as anarchic, arguing that it had sidelined and circumvented existing laws. They insisted that the real issue lies in the siphoning of funds meant for stray dog population management, rather than in the presence of the dogs themselves. "SC's order has shaken all community dog caretakers. We now live with anxiety and fear. Community dogs are an integral part of our society.

This shortsighted order is not only unscientific and illogical, but also fails to conceptualise society holistically. It shows that humanity is slowly fading away. Already, it has triggered cruelty towards street dogs," said Reena Chengappa, a Frazer Town resident. Harini Raghavan of Citizens for Animal Birth Control added that the multi-city protests in solidarity with Delhi's dogs amplify the neutral voices of ordinary people.

"The SC refused to listen to animal caretakers, but their voices are now reverberating across the country. It is reassuring that Karnataka fully supports ABC rules prohibiting impounding and relocation, even before the protests began. I hope other states, and our honourable courts, also choose compassion," Raghavan said.

Vande Bharat bookings cross 100%

The Dharwad–Bengaluru Vande Bharat Express has become a major success, consistently recording over 100% advance bookings. celebrate for its clean coaches, hygienic food, punctuality, and reduces travel time, it remains a preferred choice despite higher fares. Carrying more than 12,000 passengers monthly, it generates ₹1.3 crore revenue, maintaining a steady 101% booking rate. — BMB

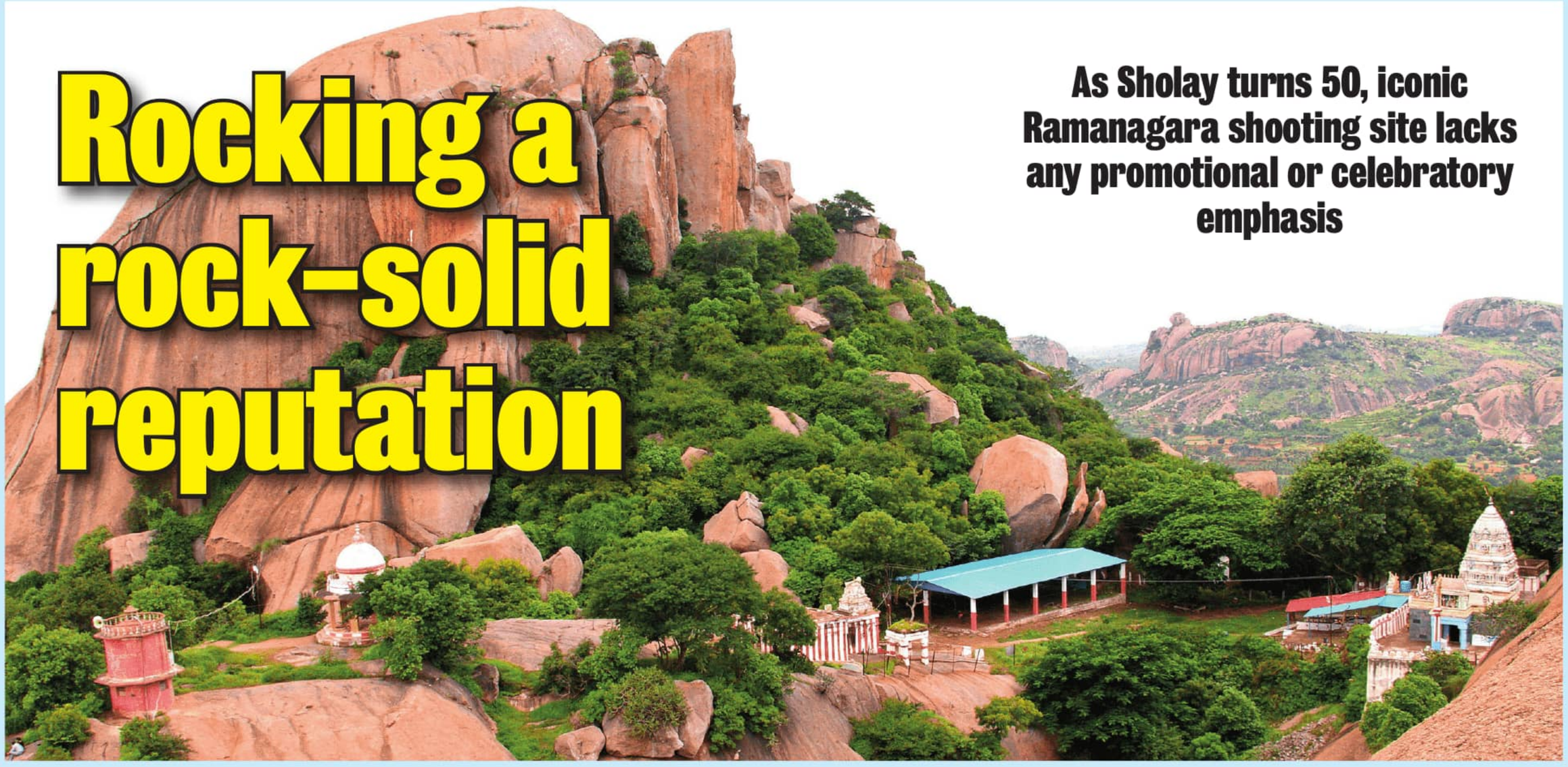
Karnataka releases ₹4.5 crore for ASHAs

The Karnataka government has disbursed ₹4.5 crore as incentive payments for ASHA workers, part of the ₹18.48 crore sanctioned for the initiative. Each worker in non-upgraded sub-health centres and urban areas under the Ayushman Arogya Mandirs scheme will receive a team-based incentive of ₹1,000. The released funds cover the second quarter, with strict instructions for proper utilisation, treasury routing, and full compliance reporting. — BMB

SUNDAY READ

Rocking a rock-solid reputation

As Sholay turns 50, iconic Ramanagara shooting site lacks any promotional or celebratory emphasis



| Sridhar.Vivan
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The drive from Bengaluru to Mysuru is a familiar one for many — a fast-moving stretch where modern expressway meets timeless countryside. Yet, just before you cross Ramanagara, a sight makes travellers slow down. Rising abruptly on either side of the road are craggy hills, rocky outcrops, and rugged terrain that looks straight out of a film set. For an entire generation, this isn't just any landscape. These are the Sholay hills — the very backdrop against which Ramesh Sippy recreated the fictional village of Ramgarh, giving Indian cinema one of its most unforgettable movies.

Film buff Narasimha Murthy puts it simply: "Sholay didn't just use a location, it turned a hill into a legend. Ramanagara became Ramgarh, and Indian cinema was never the same again."

The older generation still recalls how, in the 1970s, trucks carrying film equipment would wind their way up to Ramadevarabetta, transforming it into Gabbar Singh's den and Jai and Veeru's battlefield. Today, while traffic zooms past on the highway, the hills continue to hold a quiet cinematic memory.

Half a century of magic

This Friday, August 15, 2025, marked a milestone as Sholay completed 50 years since its release. First screened on Independence Day in 1975, the movie quickly grew into a phenomenon. Its dialogues became household catchphrases, its characters part of pop culture, and its songs hummed across generations. Five decades later, the mere mention of Sholay still evokes nostalgia.

"The magic of Sholay lies in the fact that even after 50 years, people still laugh, cry, and cheer at the same moments," says retired schoolteacher Lakshmi Narayan, who watched it multiple times . "It wasn't just a movie — it was an experience, a festival."

The cast reads like a who's who of Indian cinema: Amitabh Bachchan, Dharmendra, Sanjeev Kumar, Hema Malini, Jaya Bachchan, and Amjad Khan. With Salim–Javed's writing and Ramesh Sippy's direction, the film became much more than a story of friendship and revenge. It was cinema at its most ambitious — blending action, emotion, and spectacle in a way India had never seen before.

The film that changed everything

Made at a then-hefty budget of 2.4 crore, Sholay went on to earn thousands of crores of rupees over the years and remains one of the most-watched films in India. Its run at Mumbai's Minerva Theatre — an uninterrupted 286 weeks, over five years — is still spoken of as a record.

The movie was more than a commercial success; it was a turning point. It cemented Amitabh Bachchan as the 'angry young man', gave Amjad Khan's Gabbar Singh a place in cinematic legend, and established a benchmark for ensemble storytelling.

Internationally too, Sholay was recognised, earning a place on the BBC's list of the greatest films of the millennium.

"After Sholay, Indian filmmakers realised that cinema could be both mass entertainment and art on an epic scale," notes film critic Prakash. "It reset the rules."

'Sholay Hill' today

Yet, for all its glory, the place that gave Sholay its soul has been left behind. Ramadevarabetta, also called 'Sholay Hill', continues to stand tall just 3 km from Ramnagar town and about 50 km from Bengaluru. At its base lies a temple, and steps lead visitors to the top. For the faithful, it remains a religious landmark. For film enthusiasts, it is sacred for another reason — it is where Gabbar Singh's laughter once echoed.

Tourists still visit, trekking up the stone steps, clicking pictures against the rocks, and reliving memories of Jai and Veeru. But the hill itself has seen little structured development in terms of tourism. "People come here because of their love for the movie, not because of any promotion," says Manjunath, a local shopkeeper who has seen generations of fans arrive.

From reel to real

The making of Sholay stretched over two years, with even a special road built to reach the sets. Boramma, a resident of Ramanagar, who was just seven at the time, recalls how the film not only created memories but also forged real-life bonds. "A man from the camera crew noticed her sister during the shoot, proposed marriage, and with her parents' consent, the families became relatives. In a delightful twist, my sister's wedding was held on the very same wedding set built for the film." Today, Boramma works as a guide, sharing these timeless Sholay stories with visitors.

Landmark waiting to shine

It feels ironic that while Sholay is celebrated across the world as a cinematic masterpiece, the actual site of its creation remains largely neglected. Film tourism is a booming industry in many parts of the globe — from New Zealand's Hobbiton to Hollywood's Walk of Fame — yet Ramanagara's hills are still waiting for that attention. "With a bit of vision, this could be India's own film heritage site," says Bengaluru-based techie Anjali Rao. "A museum, curated tours, even an annual Sholay festival — it would draw fans from across the world."

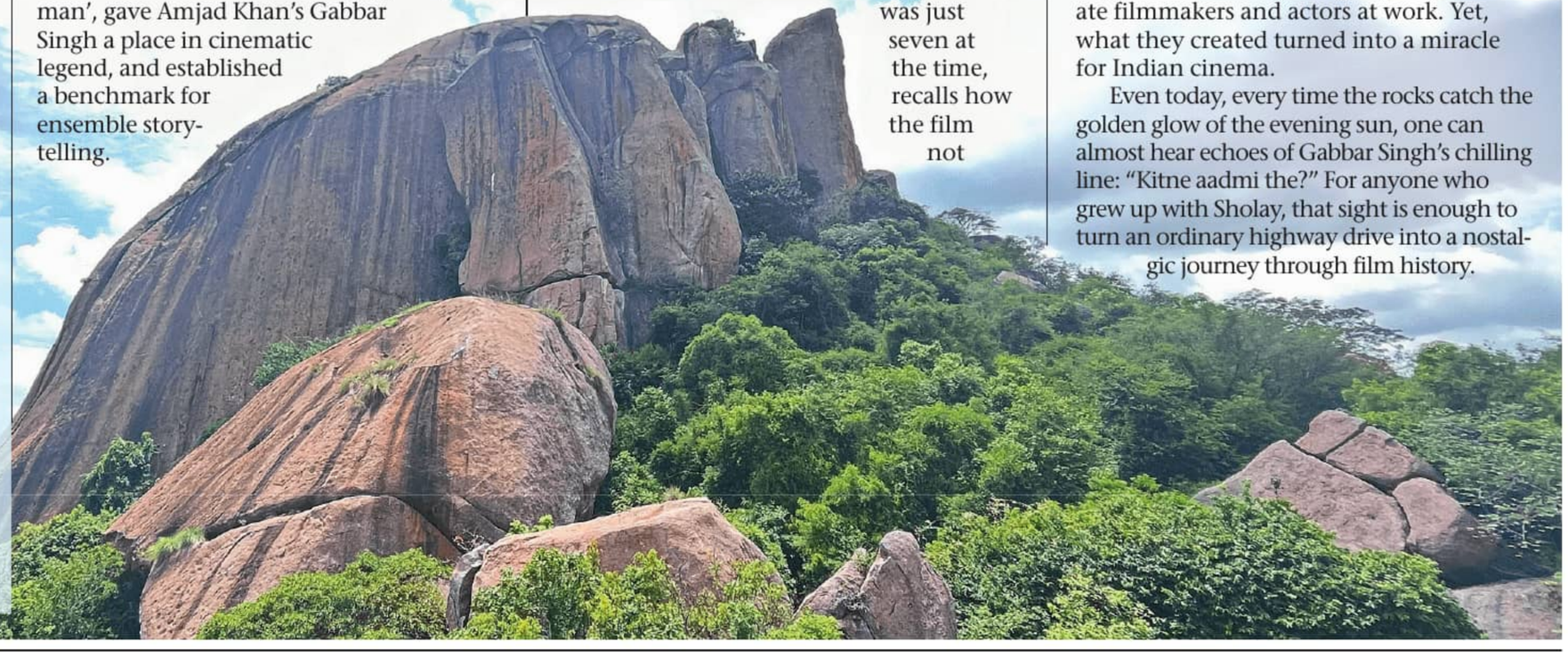
Ride through nostalgia

As vehicles speed past on the Bengaluru–Mysuru Road, the rugged Ramanagara hills remain timeless. For those who pause, they are a reminder that cinematic magic can come from the most ordinary landscapes. Fifty years ago, no miracles happened here — just a group of passionate filmmakers and actors at work. Yet, what they created turned into a miracle for Indian cinema.

Even today, every time the rocks catch the golden glow of the evening sun, one can almost hear echoes of Gabbar Singh's chilling line: "Kitne aadmi the?" For anyone who grew up with Sholay, that sight is enough to turn an ordinary highway drive into a nostalgic journey through film history.

"With a bit of vision, this could be India's own film heritage site. A museum, curated tours, even an annual Sholay festival — it would draw fans from across the world

–Anjali Rao,
Bengaluru-based techie



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BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

STANDING OUT

Our reader captured this Oriental Lily at the Independence Day Lalbagh Flower Show 2025 that was the cynosure of all eyes. It was the biggest flower in the whole lot of colourful flowers in that arrangement. The white colour contrasting with the other colours made it appear as though nature was ready to paint with its palette.

The picture was clicked by reader **Venkatalakshmi S**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com**

Major expansion of KG Layout on the horizon

BDA plans major expansion with 5,755 acres acquisition in West Bengaluru

Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) is set to undertake another large-scale residential project expansion—this time in the western parts of the city. Following its recent approval to extend Dr. Shivaram Karanth Layout in North Bengaluru by an additional 3,000 acres, the BDA has now identified 5,755 acres and 32 guntas for the extension of the Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout. The proposed expansion covers 17 villages located between Mysuru Road and Magadi Road, beyond the NICE Road corridor. Of these, one village falls under the Magadi Development Authority. Sources from the BDA confirmed that the acquisition plan has been approved by the board and five separate land acquisition teams have already carried out surveys and prepared blueprints.

Land Acquisition Process Begins

Sources said that a preliminary notification has been issued to acquire land in villages such as Maragondanahalli, Maligondanahalli, Hamohalli (Kengeri Hobli), Chikelluru, Rampura, Venkatapura, Kolluru, Nanjundapura, Gurunayakapura, Kethohalli, Rampura, Narasipura, Theshagiri Pura, Kaniminike, Kodigenahalli, Heegehalli, and Muddinapalya (Tavarekere Hobli). The BDA plans to follow the 40:60 land-sharing compensation model, where developed plots are allotted to landowners in exchange for acquired land. In addition to the 5,755 acres, the BDA is also looking to acquire another 3,200 acres, which includes land dropped from previous acquisition plans, 38 acres earmarked for roads in the revised master plan, 1,317 acres excluded earlier, and 1,868 acres in four villages adjoining the layout.

File photo of Kempegowda Layout. Sources say land acquisition process is progressing

Six New Layouts Planned along PRR-2

A BDA official said, "Parallel to this expansion, the BDA has secured government approval to create six new layouts along the upcoming Bengaluru Business Corridor (Peripheral Ring Road – Phase 2), covering areas from Hosur Road through Bannerghatta Road, Kanakapura Road, and Mysuru Road. The Urban Development Department has approved the issuance of a preliminary notification for acquiring 6,217 acres and 3.88 guntas for these new layouts, with landowners being compensated either through the 40:60 developed plot-sharing model or in cash."

Slow Progress in Existing Kempegowda Layout

The Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout development began in 2010, with around 29,000 sites allotted. However, due to delays in providing basic infrastructure, only about 50 houses were initially constructed. Currently, 250 more houses are under construction, and asphalting of roads is in progress. Power and water connections are yet to be provided. Initially, a notification was issued to acquire 4,040 acres in Phase 1, but the BDA has so far managed to acquire only 2,650 acres. A BDA official added, "The latest expansion plan signals the BDA's intention to significantly boost residential development in Bengaluru's western and southern corridors, even as existing layouts await full infrastructure support."

— BMB

DID YOU KNOW?

Early human ancestors during the Old Stone Age were more picky about the rocks they used for making tools than previously known, according to research published Friday. Not only did these early people make tools, they had a mental picture of where suitable raw materials were located and planned ahead to use them, traveling long distances. By around 2.6 million years ago, early humans had developed a method of pounding rocks together to chip off sharp flakes that could be used as blades for butchering meat.
This allowed them to feast on large animals like hippos that gathered near a freshwater spring at the Nyayanga archaeological site in Kenya.
"But hippo skin is really tough" — and not all rocks were suitable for creating blades sharp enough to pierce hippo skin, said co-author Thomas Plummer, a paleoanthropologist at Queens College of the City University of New York. Co-author Emma Finestone of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History added: "When we think about stone tools, not every rock is equal in terms of the quality of tools." At the Nyayanga site, researchers found durable blades made of quartzite, a rock material that they traced to streambeds and other locations around 8 miles (13 kilometers) away. The new research appears in the journal Science Advances. — AP

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Heathrow Airport not 'given away for free' in the 1980s

Claim: UK PM Margaret Thatcher gave Heathrow Airport away for free
Fact: Social media posts misstate ownership history

A widely-circulated social media post saying that Britain's Heathrow Airport makes 3.5 billion pounds ($4.73 billion) per year claims falsely that former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher "gave it away for free." An August 2 X post said: "Heathrow makes £3.5bn a year. How much did Margaret Thatcher sell it for? Sorry it's a trick question, she gave it away for free." However, the post misstates the ownership history. Margaret Thatcher, who led Britain between 1979 and 1990, did not sell Heathrow on its own.

In 1986, Thatcher's Conservative government dissolved the state-owned British Airports Authority (BAA) - which then owned Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and four Scottish airports - and its property, rights and liabilities were passed to a new private company with the same name, according to a Reuters timeline.

The new BAA plc, still state-owned, was then floated on the stock market in July 1987.

Gross proceeds of the sale of shares were estimated at £1.28 billion ($2.06 billion), and net proceeds at £1.18 billion ($1.90 billion), and went to HM Treasury, according to a 1988 National Audit Office (NAO) report shared with Reuters by the independent watchdog and available online.

Adjusted for inflation, the sale proceeds are equivalent to approximately £3.71 billion gross and £3.42 billion net in 2025, according to a Bank of England calculator.

Heathrow Airport Holdings Limited (formerly BAA) currently owns and runs London Heathrow Airport. According to its corporate FAQ page, Heathrow Airport Holdings Limited is in turn owned by FGP Topco Limited, a consortium of investment funds and companies. The financial results for Europe's busiest airport for the year ended December 31, 2024, show revenue of £3.6 billion ($4.46 billion) and profit before tax of £917 million ($1.149 billion).

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A spokesperson for Heathrow Airport referred Reuters to its February 26, 2025, press release announcing the same results. Chris Collins, a historian at the Margaret Thatcher Foundation, told Reuters via email the social media posts' suggestion that the government gave away the asset for free, losing out on its current profits, is wrong. The sale shifted BAA's future capital requirements to private owners, easing pressure on public finances, he added.

VERDICT

Misleading. The British government privatised BAA – which included Heathrow Airport – in 1986-1987, raising around £1.2 billion according to audit records.

— Reuters

Bengaluru stands united on issues that matter

Lake buffer zones, Tunnel Road project and Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill in line of fire

Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, Tunnel Road project, reduction in lakes' buffer zone under KTCDA (Amendment) Bill were some of the burning issues discussed during a protest organised by citizens and civil society groups at Freedom Park on Saturday morning.

Citizens, along with civic experts, converged to protest against these projects and proposals and stated that these decisions by the state government go against the fabric of Namma Bengaluru and are bound to compromise the quality of life in the city.

"We hope the Government will be responsive to the needs of the people and avoid unilateral decisions which are not in the larger interests of the city. We are contemplating legal steps, too. Already, we are in the process of filing a legal challenge to the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill in the Supreme Court, and we are also preparing a legal challenge to the Tunnel Roads and other non-plan infrastructure projects in NGT," said Prakash Belawadi, an actor and director, who spoke at the protest.

Experts and participants at the protest critiqued various aspects of the Tunnel Road project, including how it will raise traffic congestion, increase commute time and cost, and also increase air and noise pollution. "There is a need to quickly and drastically improve public transport, walkability, cyclability, and drainage systems to make the city more livable, instead of wasting our precious resources on an impractical tunnel road project," said Rajkumar Dugar, a campaigner for public transport.

IN FOCUS
CITIZENS' PROTEST

Citizens, along with civic experts, converged to protest against these projects and proposals in Freedom Park, on Saturday

Civic experts at the event also criticised the government for introducing the KTCDA (Amendment) bill to reduce the buffer zones of lakes. They underlined the importance of buffer zones and how the city will die without the protection of at least the remaining lakes. "Every aspect of the environment, of which lakes are an important part, should be protected. The state government has ignored our country's constitution and has not provided the city with a planning authority, master planning, or devolved government. Greater Bengaluru Authority is a usurpation of the grassroots democracy, which was promised to us in the constitution; it is an unconstitutional move and weakens Local Governance," said Sandeep Anirudhan from 'Citizens' Agenda for Bengaluru'. Kathyayini Chamaraj from Civic Bangalore highlighted that the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act is against the 74th Amendment of the Constitution, and it deprives the city of autonomy. "The Act increases the interference of the state government and legislators in city governance, disempowering ward committees and altogether removing area sabhas," said Chamaraj.

To express solidarity with the citizens' protest, Leo Saldhanha of ESG India made an appearance in a wheelchair due to health concerns. The meeting resolved to continue protests against recently proposed projects of the state government through various fora. **–BMB**

GST overhaul

Simplified structure:
Just two main tax slabs of **5%** and **18%**

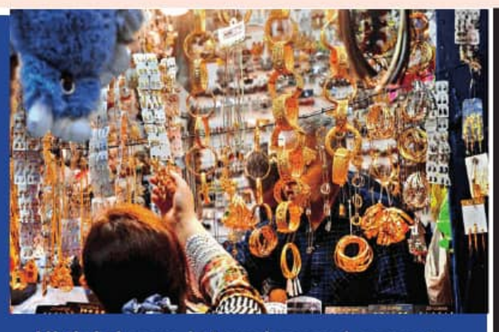
Special **40%** rate for luxury and sin goods

About **99%** of items currently taxed at 12% are likely to be moved to the **5%** bracket

Around **90%** of taxable goods in the existing 28% slab are expected to shift to the proposed 18% category

Common man items, daily-use products are likely to be taxed at **5%** as part of the upgraded GST regime

The special **40%** rate would be levied only on seven items, including tobacco, although the total incidence of tax on tobacco would remain at the current 88%



High labour-intensive and export-oriented sectors such as diamonds and precious stones would continue to be taxed at existing rates

*Present GST structure: Came into effect on **July 1, 2017**

—**18%** slab accounts for the largest share, **65%**, of total collections. The top **28%** tax bracket contributes 11% of GST revenue, the **12%** slab about **5%**, and the lowest **5%** rate on essential items around **7%**

(Source: PTI)

INBRIEF

Transport Dept probes vehicle tax evasion since 2005

The Transport Department has begun action to identify officials involved in large-scale tax evasion linked to underreporting the dimensions of private service vehicles and maxicabs. A probe team, set up after complaints against the Electronic City RTO, found that vehicle dimensions were either incorrectly recorded or missing altogether, leading to significant tax loss. In a sample check of 24 vehicles, evasion of 21.12 lakh was detected, with estimates suggesting that scrutiny of 3,240 vehicles could reveal tax fraud running into crores of rupees.

The audit also revealed discrepancies in records—many vehicles of the same model had varying dimensions, while details for hundreds of others were missing entirely. Some files were never produced for inspection despite repeated orders, raising suspicions of deliberate suppression. Though the reports confirm tax evasion, they do not name the responsible officers. So, the department has now directed the Bengaluru Joint Transport Commissioner to trace the guilty officials. Notices will also be issued to vehicle owners to recover dues, and action will be taken against errant staff. According to officials, this malpractice has been ongoing since 2005, causing massive losses to the exchequer. The public has accused the department of dragging its feet despite evidence of fraud. **–BMB**

Devadasi rehabilitation: Fresh survey launched

Karnataka government on Saturday announced a fresh survey from September to make the Devadasi rehabilitation programme more effective in the state. The announcement was made at the State Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Development Council meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at Vidhana Soudha.

Addressing the meeting, CM Siddaramaiah stated, "To make the Devadasi rehabilitation programme more effective, a fresh survey will be carried out starting from the first week of September. The Devadasi system has already been banned, and strict measures must be taken to ensure that it does not continue under any circumstances."

"The law will be suitably amended to completely eradicate the Devadasi practice. Parents and others forcing girls into the system will face stringent punishment. The Social Welfare Department and the Women and Child Welfare Department must work in coordination," he instructed.

"If the Devadasi system is still alive today, it is a matter of shame for all of us," CM Siddaramaiah said. **–IANS**

No pressure as only Indian in US Open Junior Tennis C'ship: Kriish Tyagi

Bengaluru's Kriish Tyagi, the only Indian who will be vying for honours at the upcoming US Open Junior Tennis Championships 2025 scheduled to begin from 31st August to 6th September, is optimistic of a memorable outing and his confidence stems from solid preparations and a grand debut at the recent Wimbledon Junior Championship last month.

"Before Wimbledon, I was traveling a lot, playing tournaments and didn't have much time to train. But for the US Open, we skipped a few events to make time for physical, mental and skillful training. I feel more ready now.

"One key thing I want to bring to the US Open is strength, physical dominance and mental resilience during clutch points. That's where I believe I can grow," expressed the 18-year-old who left for the US from Bengaluru earlier this week. He will participate in the ITF J300 before taking part in the US Open Junior Championships. Having taken to tennis as a 10-year-old, Kriish has risen the ranks rapidly with dedication, improvisation and discipline. He is currently India No.1 in the junior category. If there was something to spot-light upon this year,

it was undoubtedly his Wimbledon debut.

"Hitting with the players, being a part of that environment, made me feel like I belonged," he expressed. "I was a little nervous during my singles match - the crowd and atmosphere, it's not something I was used to. But I took that reflection into my doubles and I felt much more confident."

Though his singles' match didn't go as planned, he paired up with Connor Doig of South Africa and defeated British pair Davies and Lawlor 3-6, 6-4, (10-6) in Round of 32 to match it to round of 16. **–IANS**

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Teen pregnancies persist in Bengaluru

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

1,113 — a 66.1% decrease from 2023–24 and a 66% drop from the previous year. Yet, even at these lower numbers, pregnancies among the youngest teens had not been eliminated: the 14–15 and 15–16 groups each reported 1 case, while 18–19-year-olds accounted for 991 cases, marking a 65.6% fall compared to 2024–25.

Persistent social concern

Public health experts say that even a single pregnancy among under-16 girls indicates serious lapses in both legal enforcement and community awareness. Under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, any sexual activity involving minors is a criminal offence, making all pregnancies in these age groups potential cases of statutory rape.

"In the 17–18 and 18–19 categories, social factors like early marriage, lack of access to contraception, inadequate sex education, and socio-economic pressures play a role.

While some pregnancies in older teens may occur within marriage, the health risks — including maternal mortality, birth complications, and the impact on education — remain high," said Devika Kumar, a social activist.

Decline is not whole story

A health expert said that the year-on-year drop in reported numbers — from 4,498 to 1,113 — could indicate improved preventive measures, better education, or more awareness about contraception.

However, experts caution that it could also reflect underreporting, particularly in cases involving stigma or fear of legal action.

Way forward

Activists and doctors stressed on the need for comprehensive sex education in schools, accessible adolescent health services, and stronger community outreach, especially in vulnerable urban pockets and migrant settlements.

Law enforcement and social welfare departments must also coordinate to ensure that pregnancies involving minors are promptly investigated and necessary protection measures are taken, activists say.

"As Bengaluru pushes forward as a global city, the challenge remains clear: true development cannot be measured only in economic or technological terms but must also reflect the safety, autonomy, and health of its youngest citizens," Suraj K, an activist added.

BJP needs Dharmasthala for politics: DK Shivakumar

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday lashed out at the BJP, saying the party has no love for Dharmasthala but was only interested in exploiting the issue for political gains.

"The BJP did not say a word when the 'maskman' lodged a complaint, but now they are trying to play politics over it. They think that Hinduism is their private property and they need Dharmasthala only for political gains," he said while speaking to reporters at his Sadashiva Nagar residence.

When asked about the BJP's visit to Dharmasthala, he said, "Why did the BJP not say anything when the masked man lodged a complaint. Why did they not say anything when we formed the SIT? We are interested in protecting the honour of Dharmasthala; we don't want politics. The culprits must be punished."

Moreover, when asked about the demand for narco analysis for the maskman, Shivakumar said, "The demand is not wrong. But why is the BJP talking like this after welcoming the formation of the SIT? The Investigative officials will decide where to dig; we won't interfere in the investigation."

When the reporters asked about BJP leaders welcoming his statement on conspiracy in the Dharmasthala case, he said, "I said it from my personal experience. But I do not want to interfere in the investigation. Our leaders raised their voice in favour of Dharmasthala much earlier than the BJP leaders. Our CM will not let injustice in this case. The law will take its own course. Action will be taken against the culprits." wWhen asked if the digging of identified points would stop, he said, "We will not interfere in the investigation, and I don't know the investigating officials. The Home Minister is handling this."

On the passing away of Sri Chandrashekara Swamiji of Vishwa Vokkaliga Mutt, he said, "He was a very senior seer and he has been doing a yeoman service. May his soul rest in peace." On the seer supporting DK Shivakumar for the CM's post, he said, "He had blessed me, I have great respect for him." **ANI**

Cylinder blast: Probe to focus on gas leak

Home Minister Parameshwara, who visited Sriram Colony in Chinnayyapalya under Wilson Garden police limits on Saturday, described the cylinder blast as a tragic and unfortunate incident.

The explosion claimed the life of 10-year-old Mubarak and left 12 others injured on Thursday morning.

He further assured that a detailed investigation would be conducted to establish how the cylinder leak occurred.

"A child lost his life in the cylinder explosion yesterday morning, while 12 others sustained injuries, two of whom are still under treatment. This is truly an unfortunate incident," said Parameshwara.

The blast occurred in a congested area where several families live on just a 10-foot plot. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah also visited the spot and announced compensation for the child's parents. He added, "The investigation will reveal how the leak occurred.

The houses here are built on barely a 10-foot plot. Residents have demanded permanent housing, and Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed has assured that the government will construct houses for them.

An Anganwadi centre also operates at the site, where 16 children are enrolled. Fortunately, they were on leave due to Independence Day. Otherwise, it could have been a much bigger tragedy. The department must ensure greater caution while setting up Anganwadis in such congested areas." **BMB**

Spyware hiding behind image

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Officials point out that earlier scams relied on sending suspicious links that often-triggered security alerts. Now, the shift to ordinary-looking images, such as festival greetings, Aadhaar update notices, or bank communication, makes it harder for victims to suspect foul play.

Many of these messages appear to come from unsolicited senders and once the image is downloaded, it may install malicious software in the device, giving scammers complete remote control over the phone and to steal banking credentials.

Several banks have launched awareness drives on the issue, as cybersecurity experts warn that traditional antivirus programs often fail to detect such threats because the images appear harmless.

In Karnataka, cybercrime losses reached 2,900 crore in 2024, with 265 social media–related cases (including Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, X, and Telegram) registered until June this year. Officials caution that this evolving scam method could drive those figures even higher if public vigilance does not improve.

Hidden threat in images

Image-based malware is especially dangerous because it hides in plain sight, often appearing to be a harmless picture while actually carrying harmful software. "Just because a file looks safe doesn't mean it really is. The safest approach is to be cautious, don't download or open images from unknown sources, keep your phone and apps updated, and use trusted security tools that can scan such files," said cyber expert Mirza Faizan Assad.

Experts also say that platforms like WhatsApp need to do more than just check the type of file being shared. "They should use advanced scanning tools, test attachments in a safe environment before sending them to users, and show stronger warnings for files from unknown or suspicious contacts," said the expert, adding that if a harmful image reaches a user's phone, it might already be too late to prevent the damage.

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What's the prescription?

For people with ADHD, medication can reduce risk of accidents, crime, suicide

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects around 7 per cent of children and 2.5 per cent of adults.

ADHD causes difficulties with holding and sustaining attention over periods of time. People with ADHD also experience hyperactivity and high levels of impulsiveness and arousal. This can make it difficult to plan, coordinate and remain engaged in tasks.

ADHD is linked to problems at work, school and home, and to higher rates of mental illnesses such as anxiety. It's also associated with higher rates of long-term harms.

Stimulant medication, such as methylphenidate and dextroamphetamine, is the most common treatment for managing ADHD symptoms. Most people with ADHD will respond to at least one ADHD medication.

But rising rates of prescriptions in recent years have prompted concern for their effectiveness and safety.

New research published today in the journal BMJ points to additional longer-term benefits. It found that people with ADHD who took medication were less likely to have suicidal behaviours, transport accidents, issues with substance misuse, or be convicted of a crime.

What did the study do?

The study tracked 148,581 people who received a new diagnosis of ADHD between 2007 and 2018.

The authors used population-based data from Swedish national registers, including everyone aged six to 64 who was newly diagnosed with ADHD. Participants either started or did not start medication within three months of their ADHD diagnosis. The authors examined the effects of drug treatment for ADHD on five critical outcomes: suicidal behaviours, substance misuse, accidental injuries, transport accidents and committing crimes. They looked at both first-time and recurrent events.

ADHD medication helps most people, but is not effective for everyone. So, we still need to understand why some don't benefit from ADHD medication, and what other treatments might also be helpful

What did they find?

Within three months of receiving an ADHD diagnosis, 84,282 (56.7 per cent) of people had started drug treatment for ADHD. Methylphenidate was the most commonly prescribed drug, accounting for 88.4 per cent of prescriptions.

Drug treatment for ADHD was associated with reduced rates of a first occurrence for four out of the five outcomes: a 17 per cent reduction for suicidal behaviours, 15 per cent for substance misuse, 12 per cent for transport accidents and 13 per cent for committing a crime.

When the researchers looked at people with recurrent events, the rate reductions associated with ADHD medication were seen for all five outcomes (including accidental injury).

The effect of medication was particularly strong when someone had a history of these events happening frequently. This means those with the most severe symptoms may benefit most.

Stimulant drugs were associated with lower rates of all five outcomes compared with non-stimulant drugs.

It's likely these benefits are associated with improvements in attention, impulsivity and hyperactivity. People may be less likely to be distracted while driving, to self-medicate and show impacts from other mental health challenges.

What didn't the study do?

The study was not able to examine medication dosages or track whether people reliably took their medication as prescribed. It also had no way to track the severity of ADHD symptoms. This means it can't tell us if this helped most people or just some people with severe symptoms.

We know that ADHD medication helps most people, but it is not effective for everyone. So, we still need to understand why some people don't benefit from ADHD medication, and what other treatments might also be helpful.

What are the impacts for patients and policymakers?

People need to know that if ADHD medications are helpful for them or their children, they might also improve many other areas of life.

These findings can also give governments confidence that their recent initiatives and efforts to increase access to ADHD support and treatment may have positive downstream impacts on broader social outcomes.

But medications aren't the only ADHD treatment. Medication should only represent one part of a solution, with other psychological supports for managing emotional regulation, executive and organisational skills and problem-solving also beneficial.

Psychological therapies are effective and can be used in combination with, or separately from, medication.

(By Adam Guastella and Kelsie Boulton, University of Sydney, The Conversation)

Novel live polio vax safe

The novel live attenuated type 1 and 3 oral polio vaccines (nOPV1 and nOPV3) are safe and elicit good immune response, results of a phase 1 randomized controlled trial have shown.

The study, published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases, showed that nOPV1 and nOPV3 have a favourable safety profile. It also produced a comparable immune response and viral-shedding profile as the homotypic monovalent (single-strain) Sabin-strain oral vaccines (mOPVs).

"This first-in-human trial of nOPV1 and nOPV3 showed that both vaccine candidates are safe and well tolerated in healthy adults and can elicit neutralising antibody responses similar to those elicited by mOPV1 and mOPV3, respectively," said researchers, including those from the University of North Carolina.

The findings are based on a randomised trial of 205 adults at four centres in the US. The participants were randomly assigned to receive at least one dose of nOPV or mOPV. **IANS**

'Genes, drinking, stress behind cardiac deaths'

A poor lifestyle with lack of sleep, binge drinking, and high stress, coupled with genes, is playing a significant role in the rising heart-related deaths in India, said experts on Saturday.

Recently, an increasing number of heart-related deaths have been reported in the country. These have also been among people who are seemingly fit and are maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

"Not all can be called heart attacks. About 20 per cent of the heart-related deaths in India are because of certain genes," said Dr Rajiv Bhal, Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

He also blamed "binge drinking (alcohol) among the younger generation, silent hypertension, increasing stress, and a lack of proper sleep, as well as childhood obesity" for the surge in heart-related deaths.

Further, he stressed that heavy exercise in gyms, especially by people with faulty genes, can contribute to heart-related deaths. **IANS**

Study explains why loss of smell is associated with Alzheimer's disease

Brain's immune cells may explain why a fading sense of smell is an early signal for Alzheimer's disease even before cognitive impairments manifest, according to a study.

Researchers at DZNE and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU) in Germany revealed that the brain's immune response seems to fatally attack neuronal fibres crucial for the perception of odours.

These olfactory dysfunctions arise because immune cells of the brain called "microglia" remove connections between two brain regions, namely the olfactory bulb and the locus coeruleus, they noted in the paper published in the journal Nature Communications.

These findings, based on observations in mice and humans, including analysis of brain tissue and so-called PET scanning, may help to devise ways for early diagnosis and, consequently, early treatment.

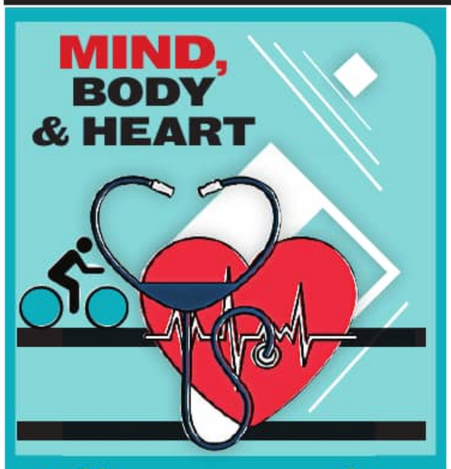
"The locus coeruleus regulates a variety of physiological mechanisms. These include, for example, cerebral blood flow, sleep-wake cycles, and sensory processing. The latter applies, in particular, also to the sense of smell," said Dr. Lars Paeger, a scientist at DZNE and LMU.

"Our study suggests that in early Alzheimer's disease, changes occur in the nerve fibres linking the locus coeruleus to the olfactory bulb. These alterations signal to the microglia that affected fibres are defective or superfluous. Consequently, the microglia break them down," Paeger added.

Specifically, the team found evidence of changes in the composition of the membranes of the affected nerve fibres: Phosphatidylserine, a fatty acid that usually occurs inside a neuron's membrane, had been moved to the outside.

"Presence of phosphatidylserine at the outer site of the cell membrane is known to be an 'eat-me' signal for microglia. In the olfactory bulb, this is usually associated with a process called synaptic pruning, which serves to remove unnecessary or dysfunctional neuronal connections," explained Paeger.

The findings could pave the way for the early identification of patients at risk of developing Alzheimer's, enabling them to undergo comprehensive testing to confirm the diagnosis before cognitive problems arise. **IANS**



All you need to know about...

Vastu tips for bedroom

Where to put your bed?
Position your bed so that your head is toward the north or east.
Avoid the end-of-the-bed facing the door as this is believed to drain energy.
Provide at least 2–3 inches between the bed and the wall to allow for air circulation and flow of energy.
Keep the bed clear of beams or sloped ceilings overhead.
Expert Tip: South, the headboard is said to be aligned with the magnetic field of the earth, which allows the body to settle down into restful, deep sleep.

Colours for a calm vibe
Choose soft warm colours such as cream, peach, pastel pink or muted beige.
You can use soft calming greens or blues for items like cushions and throws, as accents.
You should avoid the prominent use of strong reds, rich blacks and very bright neons on large walls.
Expert Tip: Warm neutrals can dull visual stimulation, helping to signal to your mind that it's time to unwind.

Natural light
Let the early morning sunlight in. It's a natural alarm and lifts the mood.
Use sheer curtains for those days when sunlight is still too harsh, but you want the space to be bright.
Avoid placing very bright, direct light interacting with your bed. And if you do use table lamps instead, with a shade that can be adjusted for low light.
Dim light in the evening may also help your brain produce melatonin for sleep.
Expert Tip: Balanced natural daylight during the day and warm, low light during the night can support regulation of your body's clock, in a good way. **–Femina**

A (delicious) guide to frozen drinks

Milkshakes, malts, concretes, frappes and more

In the summer heat, we find ourselves drawn to that glorious section of the drinks menu that promises relief in the form of a cold, creamy, brain-freezing indulgence. But ordering a frozen drink looks different in different parts of the US, and in different restaurants and ice cream shops.

So, what is the difference between a milkshake, a malt, a frappe or maybe even a concrete?

Geography, tradition and local lingo all play a role in how frozen drinks are made and what they're called.

Let's break it down one strawful (or spoonful) at a time.

Milkshake

Perhaps the most iconic of the bunch, the milkshake is typically a blend of ice cream and milk, blended until smooth and sippable. It's simple and sweet. The ice cream usually forms the base flavor of the drink, and then other flavourings are involved, from syrups to extracts to fresh fruit.

At the Lexington Candy Shop, a 100-year-old luncheonette with an old-fashioned soda fountain on Manhattan's Upper East Side, vanilla is the most popular milkshake — about 60% of all shakes ordered. That's according to John Philis, who co-owns the shop with Bob Karcher, and whose grandfather, Soterios Philis, opened it in 1925.

Their next most popular flavours are chocolate, coffee and strawberry, Philis said. Lexington Candy uses homemade syrups, he says, which give the shakes "a nice wow."

Malt

A malt is essentially a milkshake with a scoop of malted milk powder thrown in. Malted milk powder is an old-fashioned flavoring that combines malted barley, wheat flour (caution to the gluten-free crowd) and evaporated milk. It gives the drink that distinct toasted, almost nutty flavor that transports you mentally to a 1950s diner or drive-in.

Fun fact: Malted milk powder was originally created as a nutrition booster, mostly for babies, but it found its home behind the counter of ice cream shops and luncheonettes. It adds slightly richer, old-school vibes to shakes and other frozen drinks.

There are also plenty of frozen blended drinks made with frozen yogurt instead of ice cream; these are sometimes known as fro-yo shakes.

Frappe

"Frappe" might mean different things to different people, depending on where they're from. In New England, particularly Massachusetts, a frappe is what most of us would call a milkshake, made with milk, ice cream and usually some other flavorings.

In Massachusetts, you will hear this drink called "frap" (rhymes with "nap"), but believe me when I say there is no consensus on the correct pronunciation of the word. Sometimes a frappe from this region might simply be flavored cold milk, no ice cream involved.

There is also a genre of frappes associated with coffee-blended drinks, popularized by chains like Starbucks. Think icy, blended lattes, often topped with whipped cream. These are pronounced "frap-pays."

Philis says that in New York City and other regions, a shake used to be known as a "frosted."

Frosted float

A frosted float, Philis explains, is a milkshake with an extra scoop of ice cream floating on top. Talk about gilding the lily!

Then we have the concrete, an ultra-thick, creamy frozen dessert so dense that a spoon can stand upright in it. This is essentially frozen custard blended with mix-ins like candy, cookies or fruit, but no milk is added. It's more of a scoopable treat than a slurpable one.

Concrete

Concretes are popular where frozen custard is popular — mostly in the Midwest. Frozen custard has significantly less air in it than most ice cream, and a required 1.4% of egg yolks, which gives it its signature richness.

The concrete was invented at a frozen custard shop called Ted Drewes in St. Louis. If you buy one there, the server will hand it to you upside down, saying, "Here's your concrete," and it won't fall out.

Travis Dillon (whose wife, Christy, is founder Ted Drewes' granddaughter) gave this origin story: In the 1950s, a kid named Steve Gamir used to come in and ask the guy behind the counter for "the thickest shake you can make." Employees started leaving the milk out of Gamir's shakes, just running the custard through the machine, resulting in a shake that requires a spoon, not a straw.

Dillon says chocolate is their most popular flavour, then chocolate chip, strawberry and Heath Bar, but adds that there are lots of other flavors to explore, including a malted chocolate concrete — the best of two frozen-drink worlds!

Ice cream floats

Ice cream floats are the fizzy cousins of shakes. A scoop of ice cream (usually vanilla) is plopped into a glass of soda (usually root beer or cola, occasionally orange soda or a lemon-lime like Sprite) to create a frothy, sweet, bubbly concoction. Floats can be nostalgic for some folks.

Lexington Candy remains old-fashioned with their floats, making the sodas to order with syrup, stirring by hand, then adding the ice cream. In some areas of the country, you might hear a root-beer float referred to as a "brown cow."

Like floats, ice cream sodas are not made in a blender — but the difference lies in the fizzy base. Philis says his are made by combining the syrup of your choice with seltzer. Then add a scoop of ice cream. He says usually the syrup and the ice cream are the same flavor, but people also like to mix and match.

Smoothies

Finally a word about smoothies, the supposedly more health-conscious frozen treat.

Smoothies are traditionally made with fruit, yogurt, juice and sometimes ice. Sometimes, the fruit is frozen before it is blended into the drink. Smoothies are designed to feel virtuous, but they can still pack plenty of sugar, calories and richness, depending on the ingredients. For instance, if you see a peanut butter-chocolate-banana smoothie, you may realize quickly that this is more about flavor than health. **–AP**

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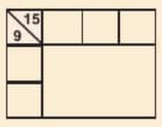
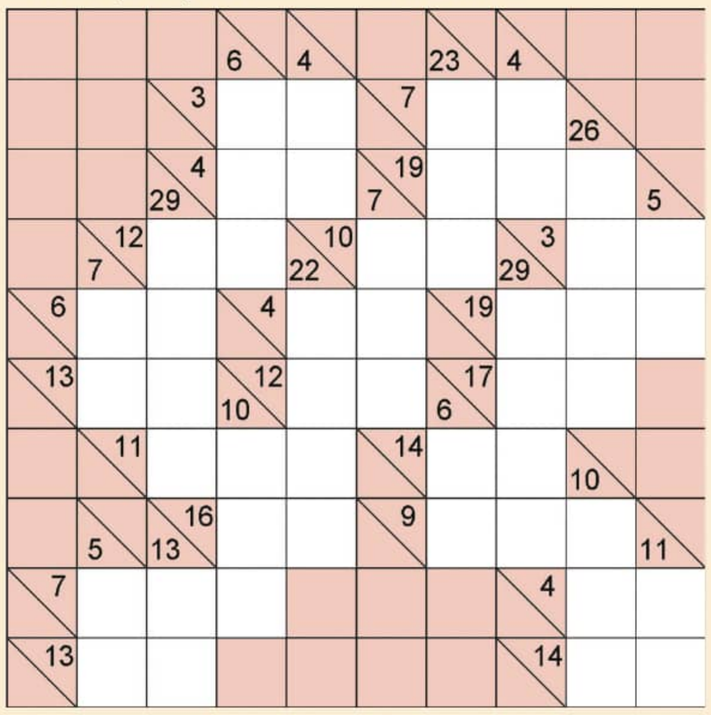
Kakuro

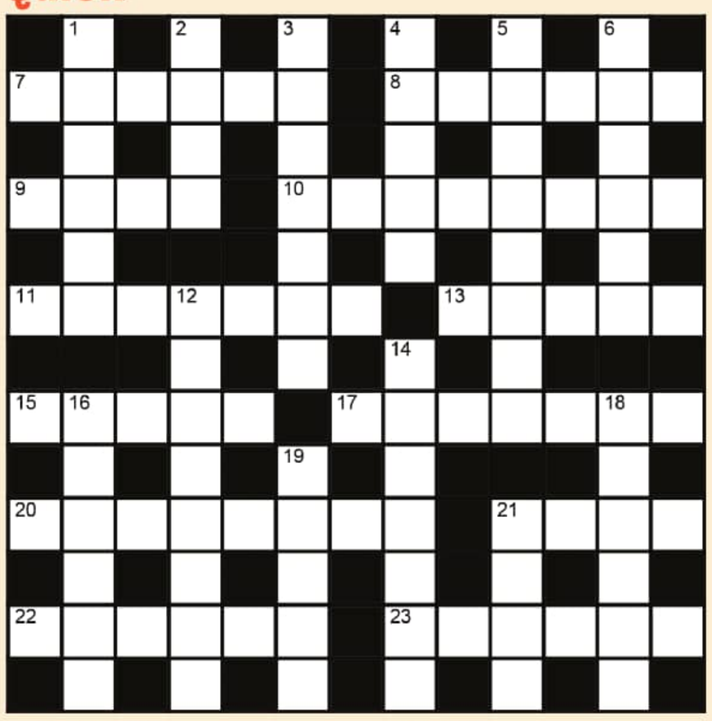
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

7 Electrician on a movie set (6)
8 Of the tail (6)
9 One who is not truthful (4)
10 Baffle, nonplus or amaze (8)
11 They accept your bets! (7)
13 Longing to scratch (5)
15 Sufficient (5)
17 Declare openly (7)
20 Driving to anger (8)
21 Chimney covering (4)
22 Japanese gangsters (6)
23 Moderating or tempering? (6)

DOWN

1 A white cotton cloth (6)
2 At a great distance (4)
3 Played a joke on (7)
4 Olfactory stimulus (5)
5 Use up completely (3,3,2)
6 Set in motion (6)
12 City in Maharashtra famous for sugar (8)
14 A general-purpose warship (7)
16 First working day of the week (6)
18 Seeding or planting (6)
19 Northernmost district of Karnataka (5)
21 Swindles (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: G EQUALS P

VSVLKW-VSVL GLQNLVK TM KRL MHSDBQLE NTIL MQTI GLTGDL URT RHZL KRL RHFSK TM IHASVY LONBELE.

Linemaro

I just had to come talk to you. Sweetness is my weakness

Mindchow

Every thought is a seed. If you plant crab apples, don't count on harvesting golden delicious

Joke of the day

The last time I drank, I drove into a ditch, which doesn't sound like that big of a deal, but I stopped at the ditch, looked left and right, then drove into the ditch

Loop

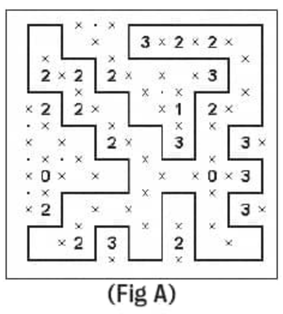
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

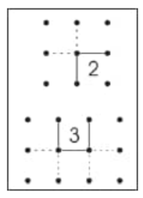
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

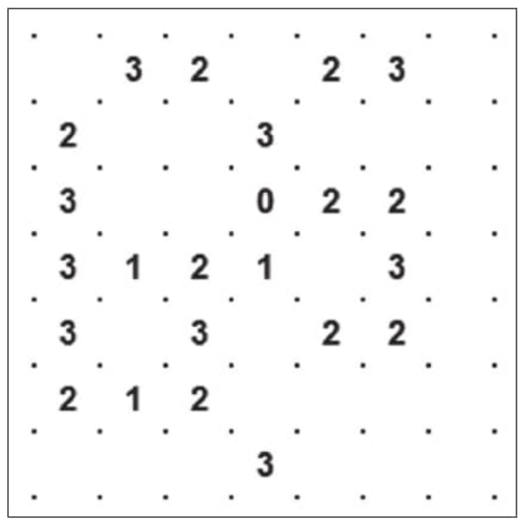
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



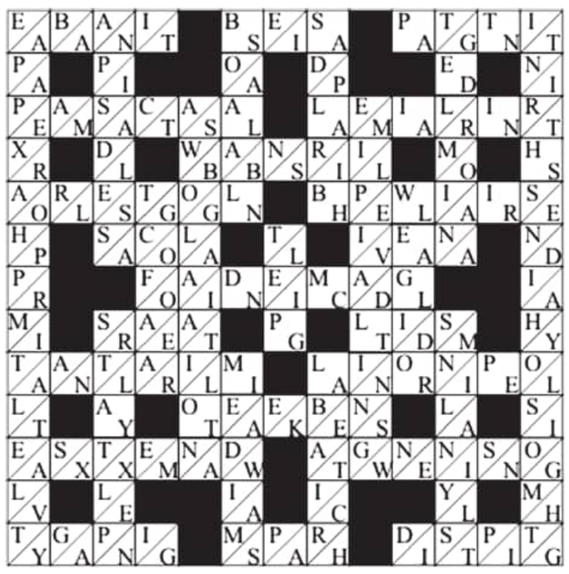
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



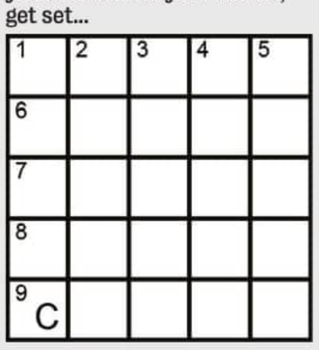
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

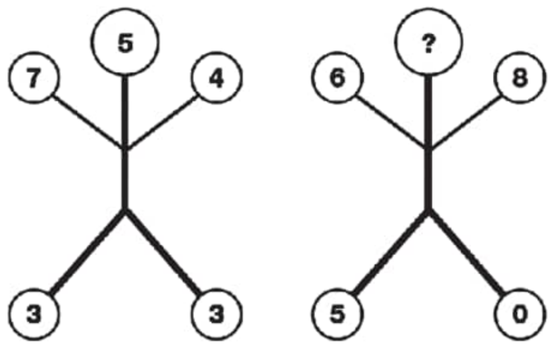
1 A page; 6 All us; 7 Staid; 8 At ire; 9 Crore

DOWN

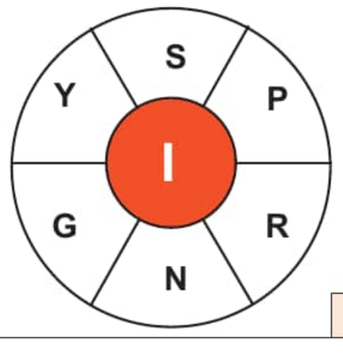
1 Sic ad; 2 Uri go; 3 Tra-la; 4 Leapt; 5 Erase

Mensapuzzle

Which number replaces the question mark in the second figure?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

11 Average; **13** Good; **15** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

		6	5		8	2		
1								5
	5		4		3		1	
	9	7				8	6	
6				2				4
	3	1				5	9	
	1		2		9		4	
3								8
		9	8		5	1		

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 16

3 3 7 9

Medium = 31

3 5 6 8

Hard = 12

1 2 3 5

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

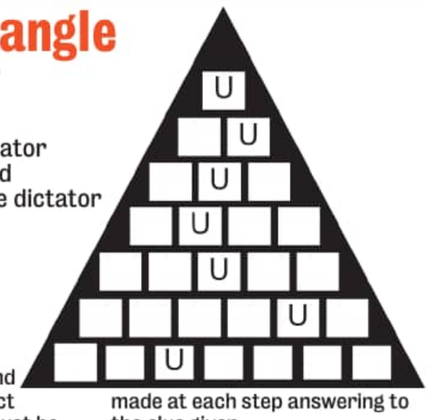
Differences: 1. Arm is shorter. 2. Paper is missing. 3. Phone cord is different. 4. Chair rung is lower. 5. Mouth is different. 6. Window is not as wide.

Riddler

The bottom heats, The top cools, And little blobs Swim in my pools I can be different colours, And be a source of light, A bedroom accessory, I light up the night! What am I?

Alpha triangle

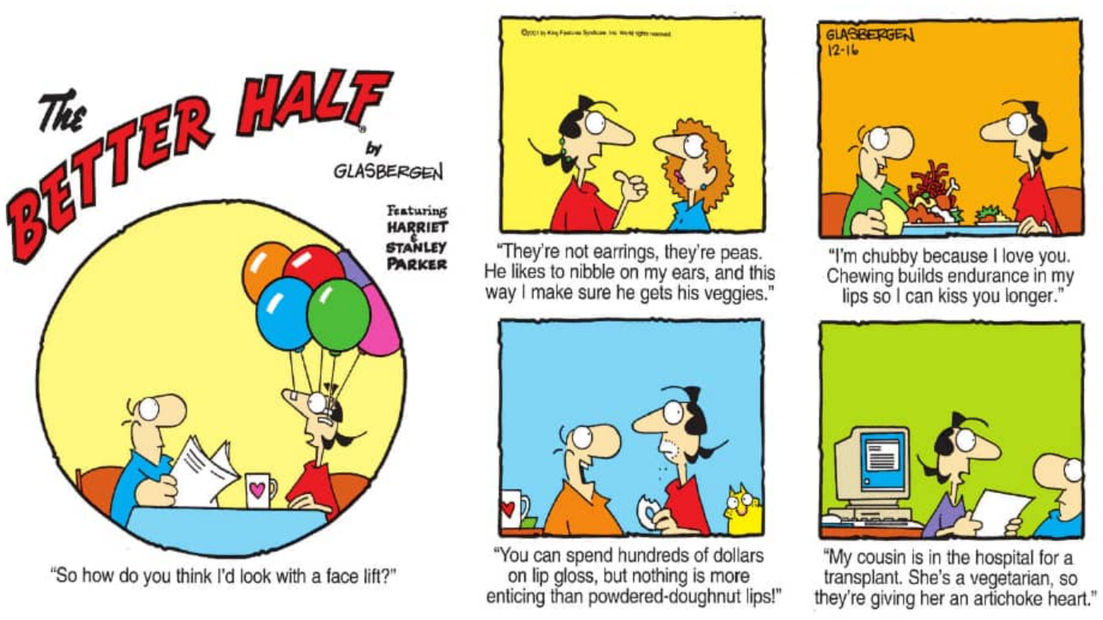
1 Horseshoe letter
2 Guam .. abbr
3 Embrace
4 Quasimodo's creator
5 Murmuring sound
6 Former Japanese dictator
7 Accommodation



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS


The BETTER HALF
by GLASBERGEN
Featuring HARRIET & STANLEY PARKER
"So how do you think I'd look with a face lift?"
"They're not earrings, they're peas. He likes to nibble on my ears, and this way I make sure he gets his veggies."
GLASBERGEN 12-16
"I'm chubby because I love you. Chewing builds endurance in my lips so I can kiss you longer."
"You can spend hundreds of dollars on lip gloss, but nothing is more enticing than powdered-doughnut lips!"
"My cousin is in the hospital for a transplant. She's a vegetarian, so they're giving her an artichoke heart."

BABY BLUES
BY RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT
HEY, YOU GUYS! GUESS WHAT ANIMAL I AM!
BBRRUUUUHHAAA!
AHH! AH!
OOH! OOH!
FLAP FLAP FLAP
RAWWRRR!
ANY GUESSES?
NO IDEA.
DUH! I'M AN ELEPHAMONKOSTRISAURUS!
MY SISTERS DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT NATURE.
WHAT WAS ALL THAT ROARING AND SQUAWKING?
KING VULTAN
RULER OF THE CITY IN THE CLOUDS
FLASH GORDON
BY JIM KEEFE 8-27
FLASH, DALE AND ZARKOV ARE BROUGHT BEFORE KING VULTAN.
MY FRIENDS! IT'S BEEN AGES!
I CAN TELL BY THAT LOOK IN YOUR EYE...THE EARTHMAN INTERESTS YOU.
I ADMIRE HIS BRAVE
WINGLESS, THAT PATHLY PALLOR TO E SKIN... PATHETIC-LOOKING, REALLY.
HE FACED DEATH WITHOUT SHOWING FEAR...
...I SINCERELY DOUBT YOU'D FARE AS WELL.
SUDDENLY...
MY LIEGE, AN ALANIAN TRANSPORT APPROACHES...
...THEY DEMAND YOU HAND OVER THE FUGITIVE, FLASH GORDON!
NEXT: TRAITOR IN OUR MIDST!

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today brings a sense of happiness. You may plan an overseas work-related trip, which could boost your business in the near future. Spending on luxury items may enhance your lifestyle, but avoid getting drawn into glamour or addictions, as they could harm your financial health.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Be mindful of your words today — harsh speech could disturb family harmony. You may be tempted to spend your hard-earned money on unnecessary items just to maintain social status. Avoid carrying money in your pocket to prevent careless expenses.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today, your focus may be on your child's career or extracurricular activities. You might seek advice regarding career options or meet with consultants and specialists. Good news regarding your child's results is possible. You may also consider investing capital into your family business.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Watch your tone today and be cautious of hidden enemies or opponents. There is a risk of being caught in a conspiracy. Avoid risky investments and lending money, as recovery may be difficult. Practising meditation or yoga can help reduce stress. Lovebirds should avoid unnecessary conflicts, and students should work hard.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Job seekers may receive new opportunities, and promotions are possible in your current role. Business owners might gain new clients, leading to increased profits. Singles may find a suitable match. In domestic life, avoid keeping secrets from your spouse, as it may create distance in your relationship.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Professional success is on the horizon. Your plans are likely to yield profits, and past investments may bring positive returns. Creativity will enhance your skills. Job seekers may find suitable opportunities, and students may regain focus through self-analysis. You'll also understand your spouse's feelings more deeply.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Morning may feel challenging, but by afternoon, the blessings of elders can help you overcome difficulties. Strong willpower will enable you to complete delayed projects. Avoid domestic arguments. By evening, gains from past investments may brighten your mood.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
The Moon's position may affect your health today. Avoid starting new business ventures, as they could lead to losses. Students should avoid distractions and focus on studies. Refrain from rash driving to prevent mishaps.

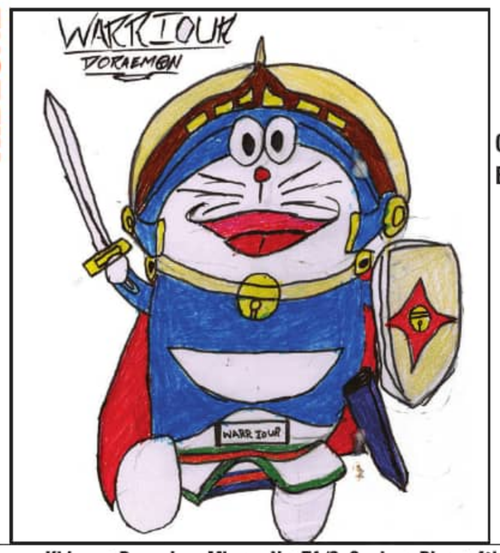
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today brings mental peace and joyful moments with friends and family, enhancing understanding with your spouse. Business partnerships may bring fresh opportunities, and innovative ideas could help your ventures grow. Past disputes in partnerships are likely to be resolved.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Good health will uplift your mood today. Ongoing health issues may find resolution. You could curb unnecessary expenses, and new sources of income might open, boosting financial stability. Singles may meet a potential partner within their community.

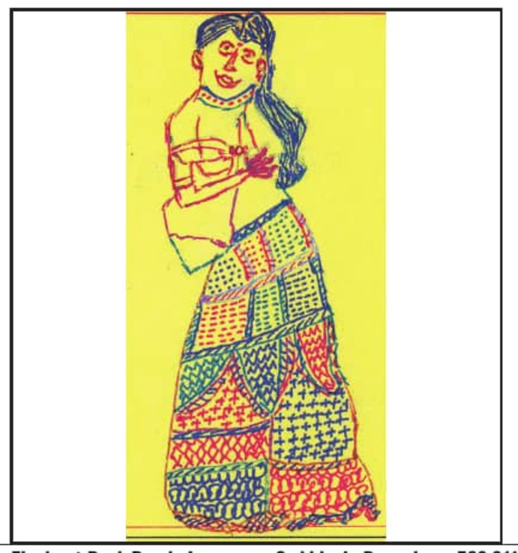
Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
With the Moon in a favourable position, you'll feel energetic and perform efficiently at work. Helping someone in need could enhance your reputation. You may spend time on intellectual pursuits or plan higher studies to advance your career.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Until evening, you might feel impatient and lack confidence, which could impact your work. A parent's health or your child's mischievous behaviour may cause concern. Focus your energy instead of scattering it in multiple directions. Avoid risky investments for now.

KIDZONE



Chethan, Bengaluru



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Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
= √(9 + 2 x 36) + (1^90 + 2)^3
= √81 + 3^3
= 9+27 = 36

RIDDLER
A lava lamp

BULL'S EYE
grin, grip, ping, prig, pryng, ring, sign, sing, snip, spin, spiny, sprig, spring, SPRINGY, spying

FAST FIVE

A	G	A	P	E
S	U	L	L	A
D	I	T	A	S
I	R	A	T	E
C	O	R	E	R

STRIKE OUT

A	B	A	T		S	E	A		A	G	N	I
P	I		A		C		L		E		N	T
P	A	S	C	A	L		L	E	A	R	N	T
R		L	B	A	S	I	L		M			H
O	R	E	G	O	N		B	E	W	A	R	E
		C										D
P		S	O	L		T		V	A	N		D
R		F	I	N	I	C	A	L				A
I		S	A	T		P		T	D	S		Y
A	N	T	R	I	M		L	I	O	N	E	L
T		A		O	A	K	E	N		A		I
E	X	T	E	N	D		A	G	E	I	N	G
L		E		A		C		L		H		
Y	A	N	G		M	P	H		I	S	I	T

QUICK

										Y
										Y
										D
										E
										N
										O
A	M	P	L	E		P	R	O	F	E	S	S
			O			D						
B	O	O	K	I		E	S		I	T	C	H	Y
				C						U		C
L	I		A	R		C	O	N	F	O	U	N	D
	L			A		I		E		N		U
G	A	F	F	E	R		C	A	U	D	A	L
	C		A		S		R			L		

MENSA PUZZLE
2. In each diagram, multiply the numbers shown on the arms together and add the number at the very top to give a 2 digit result, written in the lower 2 spaces.

QUOTE UNCODE
Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses.

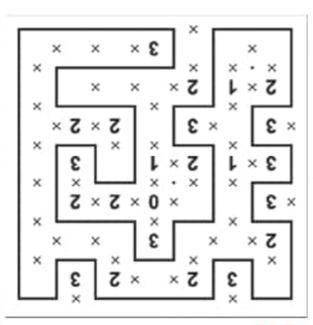
SUDOKU

9	4	6	5	1	8	2	3	7
1	7	3	6	9	2	4	8	5
8	5	2	4	7	3	6	1	9
2	9	7	3	5	4	8	6	1
6	8	5	9	2	1	3	7	4
4	3	1	7	8	6	5	9	2
5	1	8	2	3	9	7	4	6
3	2	4	1	6	7	9	5	8
7	6	9	8	4	5	1	2	3

ALPHA TRIANGLE
U, Gu, Hug, Hugo, Sough, Shogun, Housing.

GO FIGURE
7 + 9 – 3 + 3 = 16
Easy
3 x 6 + 8 + 5 = 31
Hard
3 x 2 + 1 + 5 = 12
Medium

LOOP



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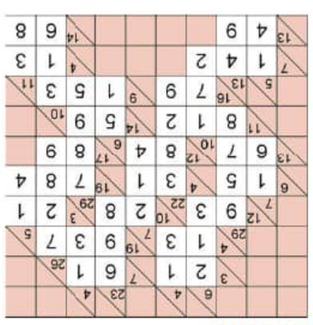


Volume No 18, Issue No 033 RNI NO:KARENG/2007/22325 Published for the Proprietors, Metropolitan Media Company Ltd by R.J. Prakashan at No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011 and printed by him at Bennett Coleman & Co Ltd., The Times of India Press, No. 9/10/11-A, 4th Main, KIADB Bommasandra Industrial Area, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore - 560 099 (Phones : Press : 080-22899999; Editorial : 080-40877666, Fax – 40877545, Registered Office: No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru - 560 011, Email : mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com Editor : Ms. Seena Menon - responsible for selection of news under PRB Act. © Reproduction in whole or in part without the written permission of the Publisher is prohibited.

CRUEL CHOICE OF WORDS

Malaika says people misread her confidence, make hurtful and insensitive remarks

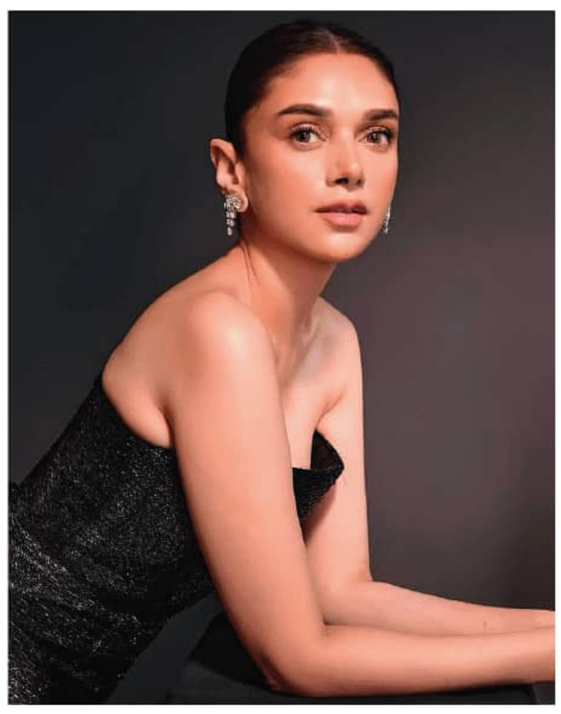
Actress Malaika Arora, known for her candidness and fearless personality, recently spoke out about dealing with trolls and online age-shaming.

In an interview she addressed being labeled "buddhiya" and the emotional impact it can have. "For me 'buddhiya'. I mean how can you even say something like that to somebody. Sometimes it is triggering, because it is highly insensitive. Because they see only that (brave) persona. They'll see 'she looks happy' but they don't realise that there are so many things that can actually trigger you, upset you," Malaika said during a chat with Pinkvilla.

Despite the hurtful remarks, she emphasises that trolls often misread her confident image without understanding the full context of her life.

Malaika revealed how she channels negativity into motivation. "I feel that you should take these things as examples where you want to turn around and say 'people go ahead to say what you want to say, I will be better than that'. I will prove to you that I can be better and I can probably do anything and everything under the sun," she explained.

Malaika also opened up about the role of her son Arhaan Khan in her life. She shared, "He's always like 'what's the big deal mom, if somebody's saying that it's fine. Why are you letting it affect you or upset you?'" His encouragement helps her reset her mindset and move forward positively. On the work front, Malaika was 'Kho Gaye Hum Kahan'. **–ETimes**



3 warm days

Actress Aditi Rao Hydari, who was last seen in the streaming series 'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar', is chuffed on clinching the Diversity in Cinema honour at the latest edition of the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM).

On Saturday, the actress took to her Instagram, and shared a series of pictures from the film festival. In the pictures, the actress can be seen posing with the dignitaries at IIFM including Aamir Khan.

She wrote in the caption, "On the day of India's independence, the diversity in cinema honour is all the more special. To celebrate and be a part of the Indian film industry. Part of diverse stories, languages, cultures, histories, to connect through love through our stories and to share our joy, pain and laughter through cinema".

She further mentioned, "I want to live in your hearts forever and you will all live in mine forever! Thank you @iffmelbourne Thank you @mitulange This was the most warm 3 days. You all felt like home. Thank you Melbourne for the love". **–IANS**

'Cathartic process'

The 'Game of Thrones' star Sophie Turner, whose split from Joe Jonas earlier made headlines, has shared that filming 'Trust' was a "super cathartic" process for her.

The 29-year-old actress was in the midst of her divorce from Joe during the film's shoot, and Sophie actually enjoyed being able to throw herself into the project, reports 'Female First UK'.

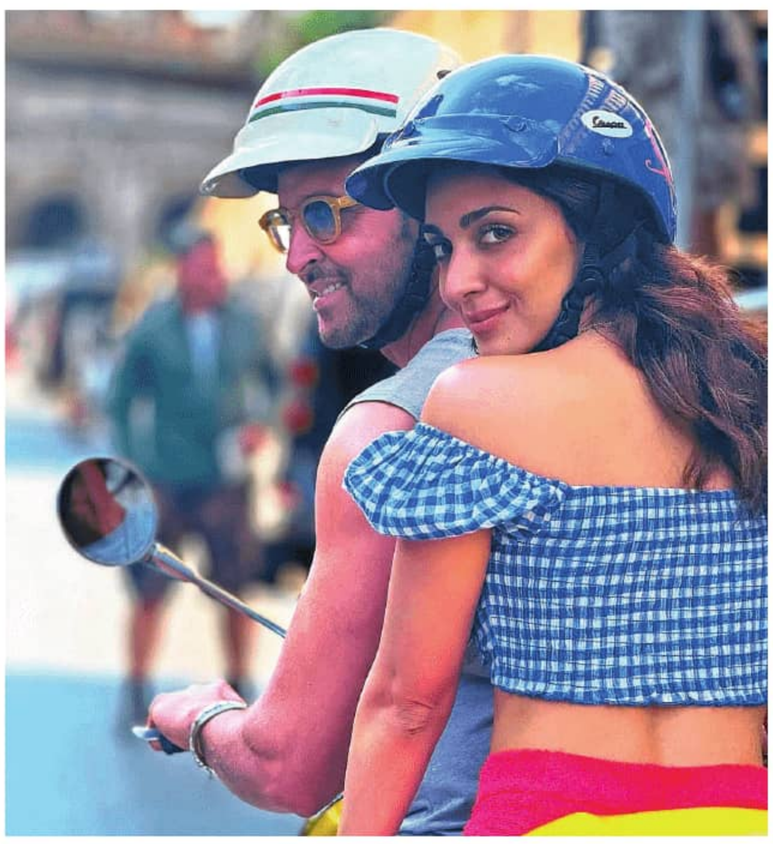
Sophie, whose character suffers a betrayal in 'Trust', said on Late Night with Seth Meyers, "I'm not sure if anyone's aware, but when I started shooting this movie, I was going through, like, a media hell. So this was super cathartic because I wanted to run away in my real life when that was all happening. But I got to do it in a movie and I got to smash some s*** up, so that was fun".

As per 'Female First UK', Sophie previously described her separation from Joe as "incredibly sad". The actress was married to the pop star between 2019 and 2024, and she admitted that their breakup was very difficult.

She told 'Harper's Bazaar' magazine, "We had a beautiful relationship, and it was hard". Sophie returned home to the UK after her marriage ended, and the actress admitted that she's now loving life in England. She said, "I'm so happy to be back. It felt as if my life was on pause until I returned to England. I just never really feel like myself when I'm not in London, with my friends and family." **–IANS**

SHE'S GOT THE LOOK

Hrithik Roshan and Jr. NTR starrer 'War 2' seems to be living up to the hype. On the one hand, the songs created a buzz even before the release; on the other hand, the gripping chase sequences have added to the charm. And though the chemistry of Hrithik and Jr. NTR is keeping the audience glued to the edges of their seats, what's winning and melting hearts of cinephiles is the stunning looks of Kiara Advani. The 34-year-old actress has taken her glam game to the next level in 'War 2.' From her sharp features to her toned physique, everything about her look in the movie turned heads right from the word go. And to attain this look, the actress followed a 3-month strict routine, which included 3 major elements - a non-negotiable diet, a well structured workout plan, and quality eight-hour sleep.



Kiara Advani's nutritionist and integrative health coach, Nicole Linhares Kedia, recently sat with NDTV to spill the beans on what all the actress did to look her best in 'War 2.' To get this snatched look, Kiara had some non-negotiables in her diet; for example, protein pancakes as the first meal of the day. Made with all healthy ingredients, these were prepared using oat flour, walnut flour, protein powder, water, and a touch of maple syrup.

Since Kiara's meals were prepared in accordance with her workout plan, Nicole stayed in constant touch both with the actor and her fitness trainer. "She did a lot of isolation workouts for her upper body than her lower body. Kiara Advani's workout also included steady state cardio," she shared.

The steady cardio practice helped Kiara reach the fat-burning zone. **–ETimes**

Festive pretty

A glimpse into Tamannaah Bhatia's most pretty festive saree looks

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